The Art of Buddhism

A TEACHER'S GUIDE

Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

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Front and back covers: Details of four scenes from the life of the Buddha. Gandhara (present-day Pakistan) 2d century B.C.E. Stone. Purchase, F1949.9a–d. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

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Introduction

Thank you for turning to the Smithsonian Institution's Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, the national museum of Asian art, as a resource for teaching about Asia. One of our missions is to help teachers find innovative ways to include the study of Asia in their curriculum. Many national, state, and local educational organizations now recommend or require the study of Asia as part of every student's education.

A team of teachers from the Washington, D.C., area helped us design this packet. We hope that teachers of all grade levels and disciplines will benefit from these materials. We have identified grade level appropriateness in the table of contents for some lessons and activities. We hope, however, that you will look over the entire packet to determine for yourself what might be useful to you and your students. Also, please note that all words in the vocabulary list (pages 53–55) are in bold the first time they appear in any section.

While the arts of Buddhism have an enduring tradition throughout Asia, we have chosen to focus on the cultures of three countries in which our museum collections are particularly strong: India, China, and Japan. Please use our outstanding collection as a springboard for lessons, activities, and classroom discussion. If you teach in the Washington, D.C., area, we invite you to bring your students to the galleries and see the objects discussed here.

Overview of Buddhism

Meditation

Meditation—the practice of quieting the mind and focusing on the present moment—is one step on the Eightfold Path of Buddhism (see page 9). The goal of meditation is to detach oneself from thoughts of daily life and observe them without judgment or emotion. In this way, one can recognize that endless thoughts and speculations about the past and future are just thoughts, not reality, and need not disturb the mind. One is then free to experience the true reality of the present moment.

One can practice meditation in a variety of ways, depending on individual preference and the type of Buddhism followed. Some methods include counting and monitoring the breath,chanting a special word or phrase (mantra), or using a visual or audio focal point, such as the flame of a candle or the sound of a bell. Meditation usually takes place seated in a quiet space.

The Buddha achieved enlightenment after an intense period of prolonged meditation. To recall this important event in the life of the Buddha, he is often depicted in a seated position with his hands in the symbolic gesture of meditation, the Dhyana mudra (see mudras on page 10).

Buddhism began about 2,500 years ago, when young prince **Siddhartha Gautama** tried to understand the causes of suffering in the world. Siddhartha was born in Lumbini, Nepal, about five hundred years before Jesus of Nazareth, the founder of Christianity, and twelve hundred years before Muhammad, the founder of Islam. He lived for eighty years sometime between 563 and 400 B.C.E.

Until he was twenty-nine years old, the prince lived a life of luxury in his palace within sight of the Himalayan mountains. Then, on several trips he made outside his palace, he saw for the first time people who suffered. Among them was an old man, a sick man, someone who had recently died, and a wandering monk. Following this sudden awakening to the suffering in the world, Siddhartha decided to leave his family and the safety of his palace to seek out the causes of suffering. He spent many years **meditating,** praying, and fasting. One day he became aware that people suffer when they want to hold onto material things. He realized that we should not become attached to possessions because nothing is permanent: eventually everything dies or becomes worn out. If we think anything will last forever, we are bound to suffer. The moment Siddhartha recognized the cause of suffering, he attained **enlightenment,** or the great awakening. From that point on, Siddhartha was known as the Buddha, the "enlightened one." He spent the rest of his life teaching in India.

As the teachings of the Buddha spread from India to other parts of Asia, two major schools of Buddhism developed: Theravada, the "teaching of Elders," and Mahayana, the "greater vehicle." Theravada extended in a southeastern direction and can be found today in Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, and Indonesia. In Theravada Buddhism, the Buddha is considered a great teacher, and each individual is responsible for his or her own journey



The Spread of Buddhism

towards enlightenment. Mahayana, on the other hand, traveled from India in a northeasterly direction to China, Korea, and Japan. This tradition not only recognizes the Buddha as a godlike figure but also involves devotion to other enlightened being called **bodhisattvas.**

All schools of Buddhism believe that every living beings experiences repeated lives on earth and has the opportunity to improve its next birth by performing good deeds in a current life. They also teach that after death, a being can be reborn into another form, such as an animal or insect, and will continue to be reborn until enlightenment is achieved. Enlightenment brings the ultimate goal of **nirvana,** the final death, that marks release from the cycle of rebirth and suffering. Buddhists believe that by following the **Middle Way,** the **Four Noble Truths,** and the **Eightfold Path,** freedom from the endless cycle of rebirth is possible.

The central teachings of Buddhism include:

The Middle Way

In life, you must reject the extremes of either wanting everything or giving up everything and seek the balance of the Middle Way.

The Four Noble Truths

1. SUFFERING
Existence is a realm of suffering: from birth to growing old, becoming sick, and dying — all life is suffering.

2. THE SOURCE OF SUFFERING
Suffering arises from desire. Wanting selfish pleasure, continued life, power, and/or material possessions can all lead to suffering.

3. STOPPING SUFFERING
You must completely stop wanting things in order to cease desire. Only when no desire remains is enlightenment possible.

4. THE WAY TO STOP SUFFERING
The way to attain enlightenment and stop suffering is to follow the Eightfold Path.

The Eightfold Path

If you follow these eight rules, the world will become a place in which all people can live in harmony.

1. RIGHT UNDERSTANDING
Only when you understand the Four Noble Truths and follow the Eightfold Path can you find true happiness.

2. RIGHT AIMS
Love and help others. Don't cheat or want things that other people cannot have.

3. RIGHT SPEECH
Always tell the truth. Listen and communicate in order to understand others.

4. RIGHT ACTION
Never kill, steal, or be jealous. Perform good acts for the sake of benefiting others, not for your own reward.

5. PROPER WORK
Do work that will not harm any living creature.

6. RIGHT THINKING
Focus your thoughts on the positive in order to overcome difficulties.

7. PROPER AWARENESS
Never let your body control your mind. Know when to say "no."

8. MEDITATION
Train your mind to concentrate and think deeply, to be inwardly attentive, and to find peace within so you will be able to learn and do many things.

Today, more than three hundred million Buddhists practice their beliefs throughout the world. The highest concentration of Buddhists is found in Asia: Japan, Korea, Nepal, China, throughout Southeast Asia, and in the Himalayan regions. A wide range of Buddhist traditions exists. Some of the practices include: making religious journeys (**pilgrimages**) to holy temples and **stupas** and walking around these sites (**circumambulating**); praying; making offerings of fruit, food, and flowers; burning incense to the Buddha and bodhisattvas in a temple; and making offerings and praying at small shrines erected in the home.

The spread and practice of Buddhism have transformed India, China, and Japan at different points in history. India, where the Buddah lived and taught, is the homeland of Buddhism. Trade and cultural exchange between India and China during the first century C.E. introduced Buddhism to China, and within a few hundred years the religion permeated all aspects of Chinese society, art, and culture. From China, Buddhism spread throughout East Asia and reached Japan. Since its introduction and assimilation in Japan in the mid-sixth century, Buddhism has been a major influence on Japanese life and art.

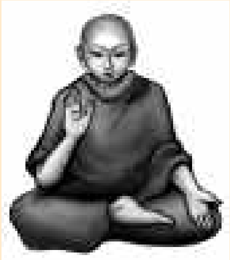
Mudras



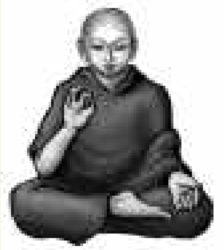
DETAIL OF THE BUDDHA'S ENLIGHTENMENT (see page 20)



DHYANA MUDRA



ABHAYA MUDRA



DHARMACHAKRA MUDRA



BHUMISPARSHA MUDRA

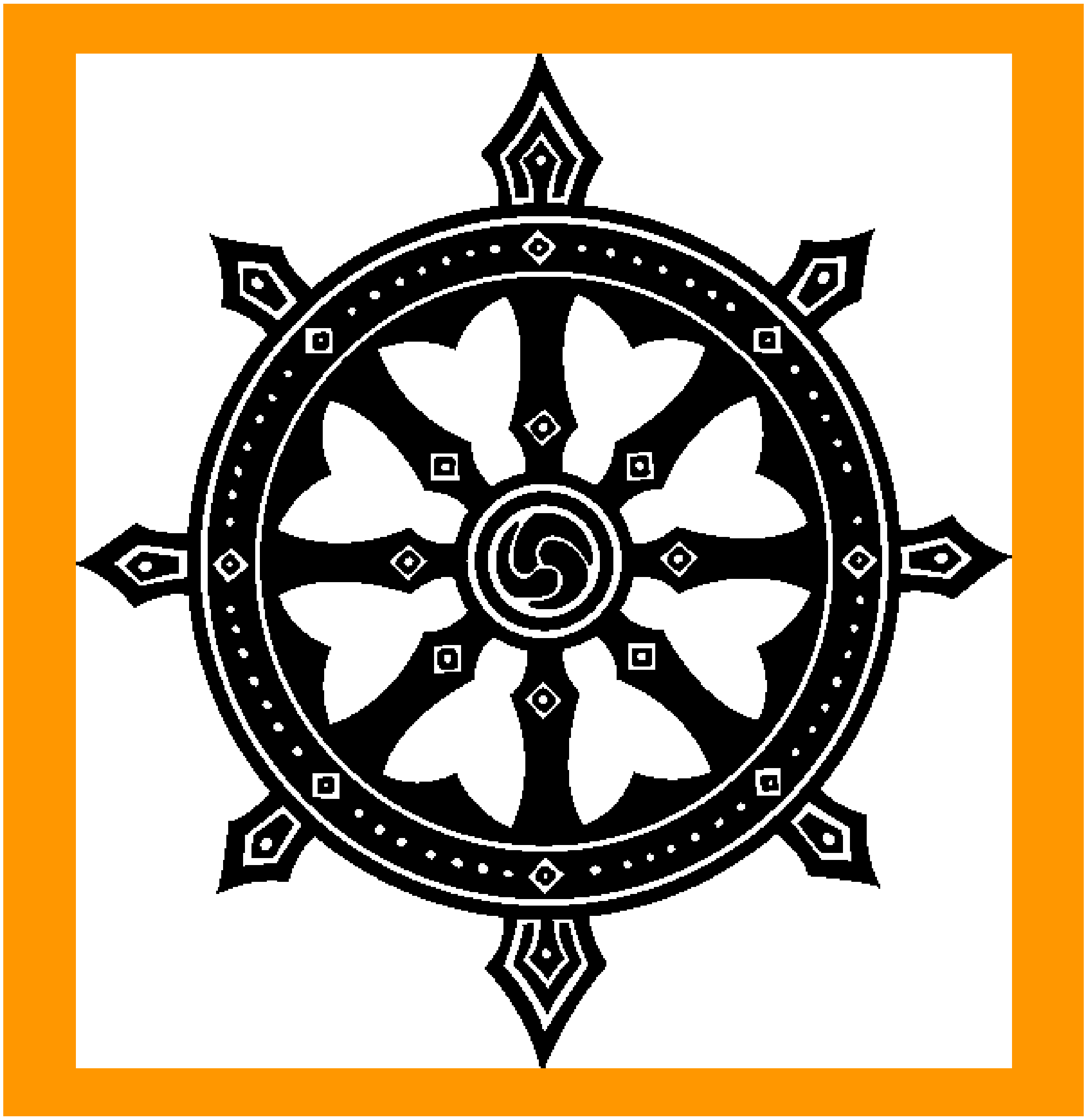
Mudras are symbolic hand gestures with special meanings seen in on artistic depictions of the Buddha and other Buddhist figures. The following four are the most common mudras used in East Asian Buddhist art.

Dhyana mudra: meditation. In this mudra of meditation, the hands are positioned palms up, right over left, in the lap. One of the elements of the Eightfold Path, meditation is the practice of relaxed concentration.

Abhaya mudra: fearlessness. This gesture of a raised right hand and a lowered left hand, palms forward, is a gesture of protection and lets viewers know that they should "have no fear." In the third panel of four scenes from the life of the Buddha, the Buddha holds his right hand in a variation of this mudra.

Dharmachakra mudra: teaching. In this mudra, the right hand is raised, the left hand is lowered, palms are forward, and the thumb and forefingers touch. This gesture is intended to recall the teachings of the Buddha, particularly his first sermon in Deer Park. The wheel shape created by the thumb and forefinger represents the wheel of dharma, a symbol of the Buddha's teachings.

Bhumisparsha mudra: calling the earth to witness. In this gesture, the right hand is draped over the front of the right leg, palm facing the leg, and the left hand, palm up, is positioned at waist level. This mudra refers to the event of Siddhartha's enlightenment. When he attained enlightenment, Siddhartha called on the earth to be his witness by touching the ground with his right hand. For an example of this mudra, see seated Buddha (page 23). The second panel of four scenes from the life of the Buddha (page 20) also depicts the Buddha holding his right hand in another version of this mudra.



The Wheel of Dharma: Symbol of the Buddha's Teachings

See examples on either side of the dome's capital in *Worship at a Stupa* on page 17 and on the pedestal directly beneath the seated Buddha in the third panel of four scenes from the life of the Buddha on page 21.

The Birth of Buddhism in India

Stupa

The stupa is not only a Buddhist shrine but also a symbol of the Buddha's attainment of nirvana. A site of worship and pilgrimage, a stupa may contain some of the cremated remains of the Buddha or other great Buddhist teachers, as well as other sacred objects. When Buddhist pilgrims approach a stupa, they walk slowly around it in a clockwise direction (circumambulate) as an act of devotion. For example, *Death of the Buddha, Parinirvana* (page 17) shows pilgrims in the act of circumambulating the stupa as they worship the Buddha. This stone relief is a portion of a fence railing that once surrounded a stupa in India.

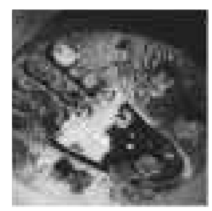
Typically, Indian stupas have a dome or anda (literally, "egg"), a pillar with stone umbrellas on top of the dome, and a wall or fence encircling the dome. The dome is in the shape of the burial mound of the Buddha. Sometimes, the surrounding wall of a stupa is decorated with important figures, symbols, and even jataka tales.

As Buddhism spread beyond India, the shape of the stupa evolved. Pagodas in China, Korea, and Japan are simply variations on the original domed stupa built in India.

The fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. marked a time of worldwide intellectual activity. It was an age of great thinkers, such as Socrates (ca. 470–399 B.C.E.) and Plato (ca. 428–348 B.C.E.) in Greece and Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.) and Laozi (sixth century B.C.E.) in China. In India, it was the age of the Buddha, who inspired a religion that eventually spread far beyond his homeland.

After abandoning his life as a prince and reaching an understanding of the suffering in the world, the Buddha, or Enlightened One, spent the remaining forty years of his life teaching people about his Middle Way. Those who follow the middle path reject the extremes of luxury and poverty, and pursue a life of good intentions and actions. After the Buddha's death, his cremated remains were placed within mounds called stupas. These burial mounds eventually became the focus of Buddhist monasteries and attracted pilgrims from far and wide.

Symbolic image of the Buddha's footprint.



Photograph by Stephen T. Eckerd

In the earliest Buddhist art in India, the Buddha is not represented in human form. Instead, his presence is indicated by a footprint, an empty seat, a parasol, or another sign. For example, in *Worship at a Stupa* (page 17), the stupa represents the presence of the Buddha. By the first century C.E., followers of the Buddha had elevated him to the status of a god. The human figure of the Buddha wearing a monastic robe began to dominate the art of India. The figure always bore signs of his superhuman perfection. The **ushnisha,** the bulge or topknot on the Buddha's head, represents his great knowledge, and the **urna,** or dot on his forehead, symbolizes his ability to understand all things. (See four scenes from the life of the Buddha [page 20] and seated Buddha [page 23].)



Photograph by Mary Slusser


AFGHANISTAN
JAMMU AND KASHMIR
FORMERLY GANDHARA
TIBETAN PLATEAU
HIMACHAL PRADESH
PUNJAB HILLS
CHINA
PAKISTAN
PUNJAB
HIMALAYAS
Tsangpo River
HARYANA
ARUNACHAL PRADESH
NEPAL
Agra
UTTAR PRADESH
Lumbini
SIKKIM
BHUTAN
RAJASTHAN
ASSAM
NAGALAND
Sarnath
Ganges River
MEGHALAYA
Udaipur
BIHAR
BANGLADESH
MANIPUR
Barhut
TRIPURA
Sanchi
Bodhgaya
WEST BENGAL
MIZORAM
GUJARAT
MADHYA PRADESH
Calcutta
INDIA
BURMA (MYANMAR)
ORISSA
MAHARASHTRA
Mumbai (Bombay)
DECCAN PLATEAU
ANDHRA PRADESH
BAY OF BENGAL
KARNATAKA
Chennai (Madras)
ARABIAN SEA
NILGIRI HILLS
KERALA
TAMIL NADU
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS
INDIAN OCEAN
SRI LANKA

INDIA

From the fourth to the sixth century C.E. in northern India, an ideal image of the Buddha emerged, showing him with a downward glance and a serene aura, his hair arranged in tiny curls and a curvaceous body visible beneath a thin robe. This Buddha type served as the model for future generations of Buddhist artists in India, Nepal, Thailand, and Indonesia (see seated Buddha, page 23).

The Buddhist faith evolved over the centuries to include an expanded array of divinities, including enlightened beings known as bodhisattvas and a range of protective deities, many of whom are quite frightening in appearance. With time, Buddhism evolved significantly from its simple beginnings. Even though Buddhism declined in popularity in India during the twelfth century, it flourished in many other Asian countries.

A Jataka Tale

A jataka story demonstrates some element of the Buddha's teaching, usually a moral or a spiritual point. More than five hundred known jatakas (literally, "birth stories") represent the Buddha in one of his former lives. In many of his past lives, the Buddha was reborn as a bird or an animal, but no matter what his form, he is always a creature of great wisdom and compassion. The story of the Monkey King told here stresses the importance of self-sacrifice and putting other people before yourself.

The Monkey King

A great tribe of monkeys once lived high in the Himalayan mountains. Every night they went to a giant mango tree that grew beside a river to eat its juicy fruit.

One night they saw something that made them stop eating immediately and stare in horror. On the ground down below were many soldiers, and they were all pointing spears and arrows up into the branches of the giant mango tree.

"Help!" the monkeys cried. "They'll kill us all!"

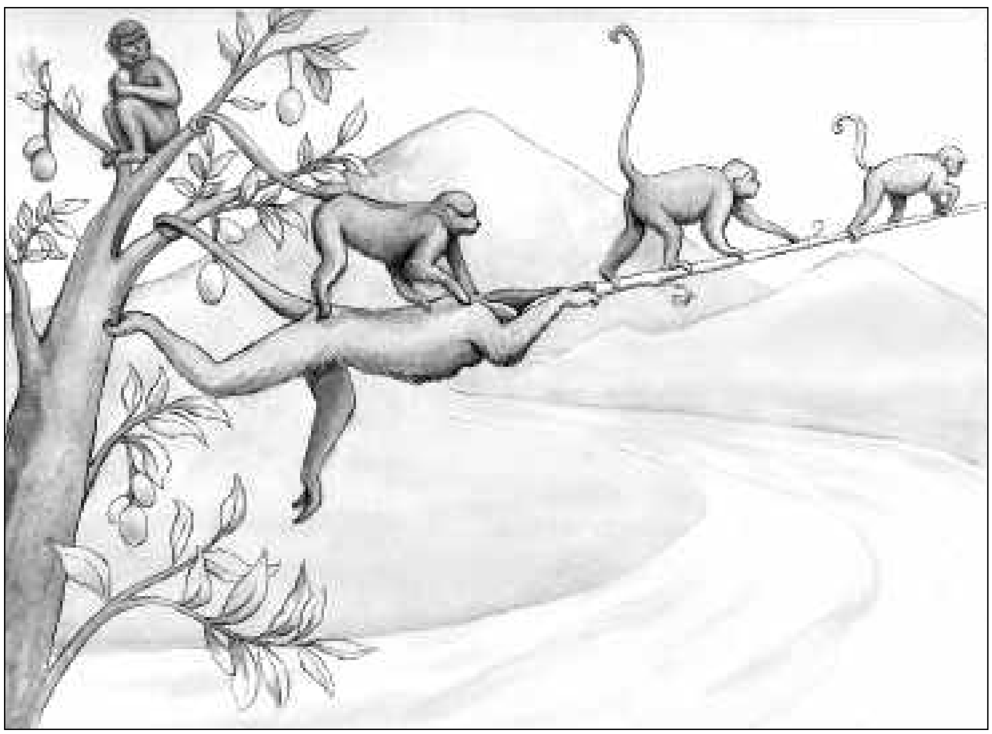
"They won't if we keep calm," replied the king of the monkeys. "There is a way to escape. Wait here."

Climbing to the very top of the tree, the monkey king made a great leap right across the river into another tree. There he found a long vine. After making sure the vine was strongly attached to the tree, he gripped the end of the vine in his teeth and leapt back over the river into the giant mango tree.

The monkey king planned to use this vine to make a bridge, but unfortunately it was a bit too short. After thinking for a moment, he saw that he could use his own body to fill the final gap. When everything was ready, he called the other monkeys.

"Now step onto my back and climb across the vine to safety on the other side of the river," he told them.

The monkeys did as he said and they all escaped — all except one, that is. His name was Devadatta, and he had never liked the monkey king. Now he saw his chance to hurt him. Taking a running leap, Devadatta jumped with all his might onto the monkey king's back. Crack! The monkey king's back broke, but he held onto the vine long enough to be certain Devadatta had escaped safely to the other side.



Standing under the tree, a great ruler of the kingdom and his soldiers had witnessed all of this activity. The ruler ordered his soldiers to lay down their weapons and gently bring the wounded monkey king down from the top of the giant mango tree.

"Although you are only a monkey, today you taught me how a true king should behave," this human king told the monkey king. "You put the safety of your subjects before your own welfare. That was truly noble. From now on, I shall try to live up to your example."

With that, the monkey king smiled, closed his eyes, and peacefully passed into the next world.

Objects of Indian Buddhist Art

Worship at a Stupa

India, Bharhut, early 2d century B.C.E.

Stone

47.5 x 51.9 x 8.0 cm.

Purchase F1932.26

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

In early Buddhist art, the Buddha is rarely depicted in human form; instead, symbols represent his presence and his teachings. The stupa is one of many images used to indicate the presence of the Buddha. This raised sandstone carving from a fence rail that once encircled a stupa refers to the continuing presence of the Buddha on earth. At the center of the carving is the Buddha's funerary mound, or stupa. Worshipers stand to the left and right of the stupa. Celestial figures fly overhead and offer garlands and flowers in adoration. Two pairs of flowering sal trees frame the scene and add to its visual symmetry. Some scholars think sal trees grew in the grove where the Buddha left his physical body and ascended into nirvana. Their presence here helps the viewer to identify the scene with the Buddha's death and his passing into the state of nirvana. Along the base of the dome are nine right hands — nine is an auspicious number in many ancient traditions — that represent worshipers encircling the stupa. One way of showing reverence for the Buddha is to walk slowly around the stupa and place your hands at its base.



Objects of Indian Buddhist Art

Four scenes from the life of the Buddha

Gandhara (present-day Pakistan), 2d century B.C.E.

Stone

67.0 x 290.0 cm. overall

Purchase F1949.9a-d

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

With the incorporation of the Buddha's human image into art after the first century, sculptors began to depict legends surrounding the youth of Siddhartha, including stories of his birth and death. These legends and historical events were eventually consolidated into a clear story line that usually centers on four main events in the Buddha's life, referred to as the Four Great Miracles. Thereafter, these four events were frequently depicted on narrative relief panels such as this. Such panels were often placed around the base of important stupas and can be considered in chronological order.

1. The first of these four panels represents the miracle of the Buddha's birth. Siddhartha, complete with halo, emerges from the right hip of his mother Maya as she stands beneath a tree. The baby's halo, which signifies divine radiance, is a symbol of honor that routinely appears on South Asian images of deities and royalty. Artistic and cultural elements borrowed from ancient Greek and Roman art include the wreaths around the women's heads, the long-sleeved blouses and gowns, and the cornucopias held by several figures.

2. The miracle of the Buddha's enlightenment appears in the second relief. The Buddha sits beneath a tree in meditation. Mara, the evil one, stands in the foreground, ready to draw his sword. Meanwhile, Mara's fearsome demon armies attack the Buddha from all sides. Notice the array of animals and half animal-half human creatures that make up Mara's army. Despite all this activity around him, the Buddha remains serene. Two soldiers underneath the Buddha's elevated platform are stricken down by the power of the Buddha's awesome presence. With his mudra, or hand gesture, of touching the ground, the Buddha calls the earth to witness his realization of enlightenment and thus his victory over the evil Mara.

3. Illustrating the miracle of the first sermon, the third panel shows the Buddha preaching to a crowd of monks and ordinary citizens. The deer depicted underneath his platform identify the location of the sermon: Deer Park at Sarnath. Between the two deer, which appear to be as mesmerized by the Buddha's teachings as the people gathered, is the wheel of dharma. The wheel is a pre-Buddhist symbol of kingship, and some Hindu gods are shown holding one. Although the Buddha gave up his earthly possessions and kingdom, this wheel refers to his spiritual authority and teaching. His first sermon is thus referred to as "the first turning of the wheel of the dharma [or law]."

4. In the final relief showing the miracle of the Buddha's journey to nirvana, local chieftains appear above him and express their intense grief. The monks, on the other hand, seem to be at peace. One monk sits directly under the Buddha's couch and calmly meditates, thus signifying his understanding that the Buddha's passing is not death but rather a release from the endless cycle of rebirth.





Panel 1—The Birth: Queen Maya gives birth to Siddhartha, the Buddha-to-be.



Panel 2—The Enlightenment: Siddhartha resists Mara's evil forces and with a gesture asks the earth to witness his enlightenment.



Panel 3—The First Sermon at Deer Park: This event is also referred to as "turning the wheel of dharma."



Panel 4—Death of the Buddha: The Buddha passes from the endless cycle of rebirth into nirvana.

Objects of Indian Buddhist Art

Seated Buddha

Central Tibet,* 14th century

Gilt copper with pigment

45.0 x 34.0 x 27.0 cm.

Purchase—Friends of Asian Arts in honor of the 10th Anniversary of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery S1997.28

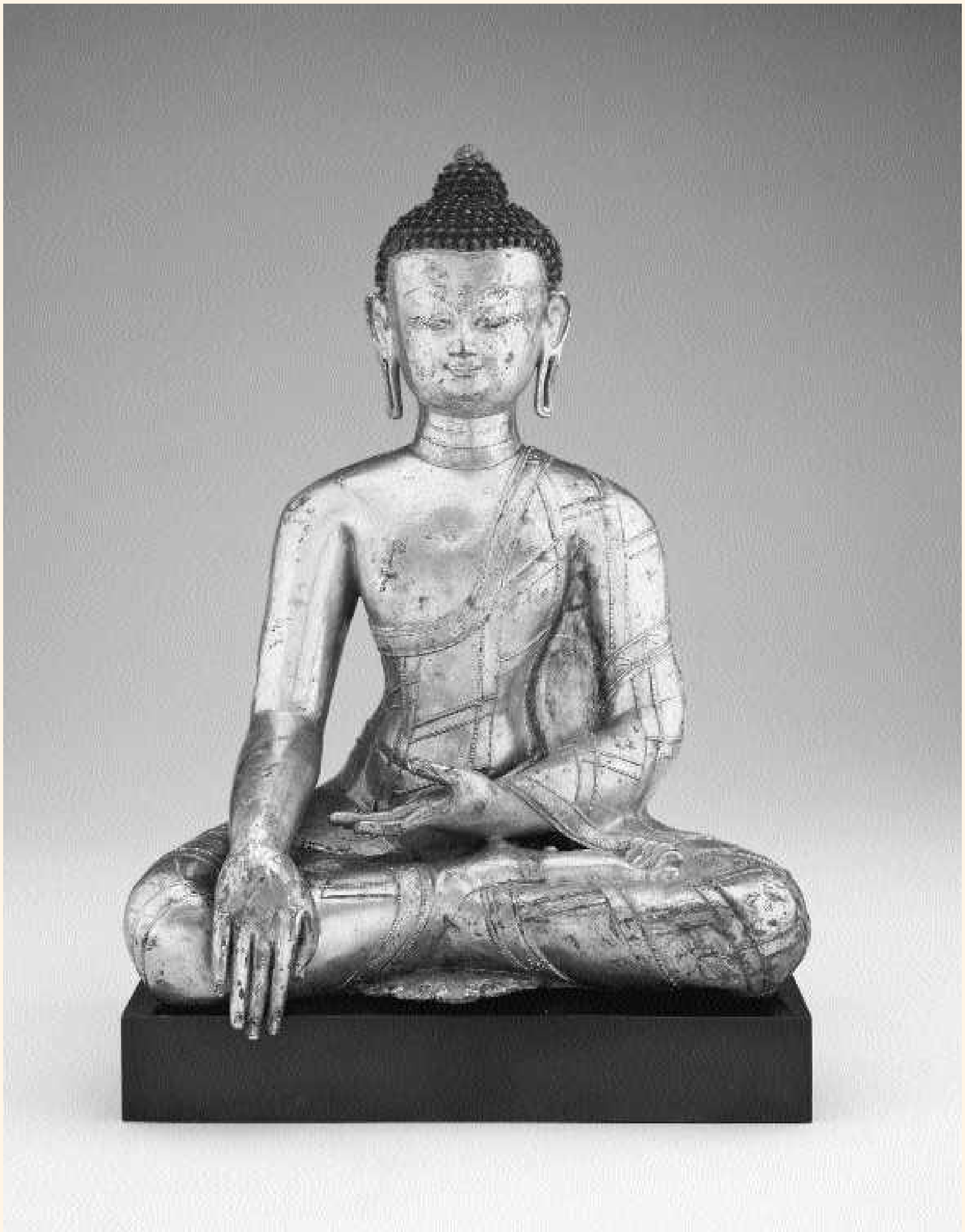
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

This Buddha was created to grace the altar of a Buddhist monastery in Tibet. Sitting serenely with one hand in his lap, the Buddha extends his other hand to touch the earth in a traditional symbol of his enlightenment. To ensure that worshipers recognize this figure as the historic Buddha, the square pattern on the robe recalls the patchwork of fabric scraps that were sewn together for the only garment the Buddha wore as he wandered the land. Characteristic signs of the Buddha's superhuman perfection include the tightly curled hair covering his ushnisha, the bump on the top of his head that symbolizes his immense knowledge. The dot in the middle of his forehead, called an urna, indicates his understanding of all things. His long earlobes, which were caused by the heavy earrings he wore when he was a prince, refer to his rejection of his earthly wealth.

This hollow-cast copper figure was covered in gold using a complex gilding process that is still in use today. A mixture of gold and mercury was applied to the surface of the copper figure, then heated over a smokeless fire until the mercury evaporated and the gold adhered to the surface. The gilded surface was then polished with a smooth stone. Relics or charms could have been inserted into the figure's hollow body before it was sealed with a thin metal plate. Such relics might have included holy texts, precious objects, and ashes or bits of bone left over after the cremation of an enlightened being or great Buddhist teacher.

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* Buddhism had been introduced into Tibet from India as early as the seventh century. Tibet looked to eastern India, Nepal, and Kashmir for spiritual and artistic inspiration.



Buddhism in China: A Process of Transformation

The history of Buddhism in China is a complex story of how a foreign religion was imported and transformed into a Chinese system of beliefs. Buddhism reached China from India by the first century C.E., but it did not flourish until the political and economic upheavals of the Six Dynasties period (220–589). In those troubling times, Buddhism's emphasis on personal salvation and rejection of worldly ties attracted believers from every walk of life. At other times, Buddhism prospered when an emperor chose it as his official religion, but its foreign origin led other rulers to persecute believers. Buddhism survived these periodic challenges and continues to flourish in China today.

At first, Chinese Buddhist beliefs and temple art were quite similar to the ideas and images brought from India. These ideas traveled to China from India along the Silk Road (see page 26) and via a southern sea route. Many Indian Buddhist concepts were somewhat changed to better mesh with the existing Chinese traditions, such as **Confucianism** and **Daoism.** For example, unlike the Indian emphasis on personal salvation acquired by living a celebate life, Chinese Buddhists encouraged filial piety to complement the Chinese tradition of ancestor worship.

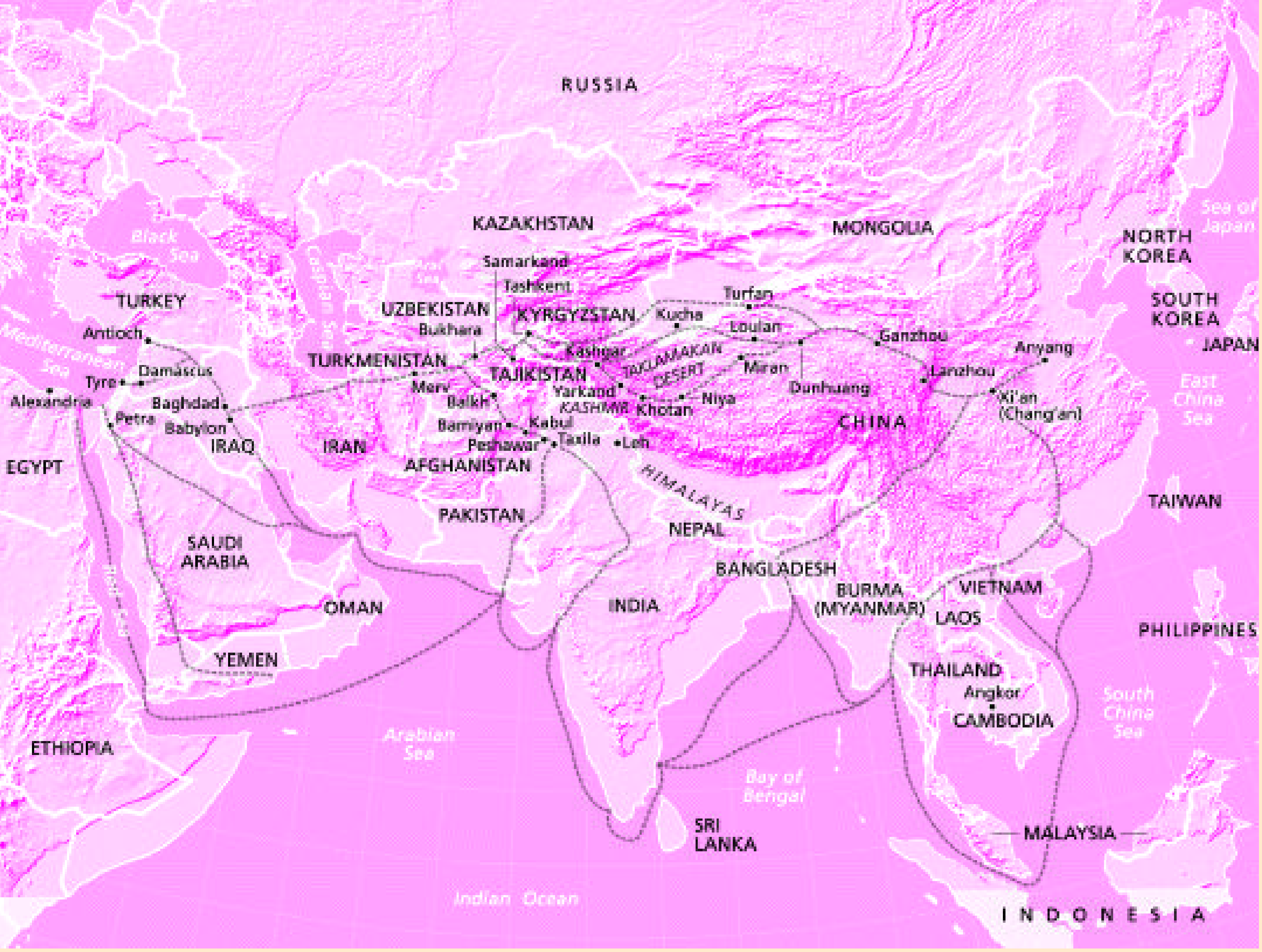
Styles in Chinese Buddhist art alternated between an emphasis on native Chinese influences and non-Chinese traditions from India, Central Asia, and Tibet. The more naturalistic modeling of human forms was a foreign characteristic that clearly can be seen in the figure of the Bodhisattva of Compassion (Guanyin, in Chinese) (see Guanyin of Eleven Heads, page 35), while the Chinese tradition of clearly delineated, rhythmic lines is evident in the standing bodhisattva holding a lotus bud (see page 31).

While the Buddhist pantheon of deities was largely the same in India and China, some deities took on new forms in China, and others were created. For example, Guanyin was always portrayed as a male in India, but he gradually took on feminine attributes in China (see Guanyin of Eleven Heads, page 35). Over time, a completely female version of this deity evolved in China.

Buddhism went through a process of becoming Chinese while it retained many of its distinctly foreign attributes. This gradual process is seen in Chinese art, for Buddhism became a cultural force that inspired some of China's most outstanding paintings and sculptures.


RUSSIA
KAZAKHSTAN
MONGOLIA
HEILONGJIANG
JILIN
NEI MONGOL
(INNER MONGOLIA)
KYRGYZSTAN
TAJIKISTAN
XINJIANG
LIAONING
NORTH KOREA
SEA OF JAPAN
AFGHANISTAN
PAKISTAN
Beijing
HEBEI
SOUTH KOREA
GANSU
NINGXIA
SHANXI
SHANDONG
QINGHAI
Yellow River
JAPAN
Xi'an
XIZANG
SHAANXI
HENAN
JIANGSU
TIBETAN PLATEAU
CHINA
Nanjing
Shanghai
ANHUI
Lhasa
HUBEI
SICHUAN
EAST CHINA SEA
NEPAL
Yangtze River
ZHEJIANG
BHUTAN
JIANGXI
HUNAN
FUJIAN
INDIA
GUIZHOU
BANGLADESH
TAIWAN
YUNNAN
GUANGDONG
GUANGXI
PACIFIC OCEAN
BURMA
(MYANMAR)
Hong Kong
VIETNAM
BAY OF BENGAL
LAOS
SOUTH CHINA SEA
HAINAN
THAILAND
PHILIPPINES

CHINA



THE SILK ROAD: LAND AND SEA ROUTES

The Silk Road

The Silk Road, also called the Silk Route, refers to a network of roads used by merchants and travelers in ancient times. At its peak, this trade route extended from Rome through the Middle East and Central Asia to China. By the third century C.E., silk and spices, as well as precious stones and metals, were traded along these routes. Few merchants traveled the entire route. Instead, they sold some goods and purchased others at points along the way. Goods changed hands many times before reaching their final destinations. New styles, products, and ideas flourished in regions bordering the Silk Road.

Buddhism spread from India to China along the Silk Road. By the fifth century, Indian Buddhists traveled the route to China, and Chinese Buddhist pilgrims journeyed to India to find Buddhist holy texts (**sutras**) and to visit the sacred places of the Buddha's life. Examples of Buddhist art and architecture are found along the former Silk Road at monasteries and cave grottoes that Buddhist monks, pilgrims, and merchants built as they made their way across the continent. Trade on the Silk Road decreased by the seventh century, but Buddhism was already well established in China by that time.

A Chinese Buddhist Story

Chinese beliefs often blend elements of **Confucianism, Daoism,** and Buddhism. Confucian teachings emphasize proper moral conduct and filial piety—honoring and caring for parents and ancestors. Daoism stresses the importance of finding the Way of the Universe and living a balanced life. Buddhism focuses on the life of the Buddha, following the **Middle Way,** and living in a manner that minimizes suffering. Thus,many traditional Chinese stories have themes and morals that incorporate one or more aspects of these belief systems.

The following story describes one of the great Buddhist **bodhisattvas,** enlightened beings who, in human form, postpone entrance into nirvana to help others reach enlightenment. Although Guanyin was originally an Indian deity known as the Bodhisattva of Compassion, he is also one of the central figures of Chinese Buddhism. In one Chinese incarnation and in this story, Guanyin takes on female form.

The Kindhearted Guanyin

A long time ago, there was a girl named Guanyin, who had a kind heart.

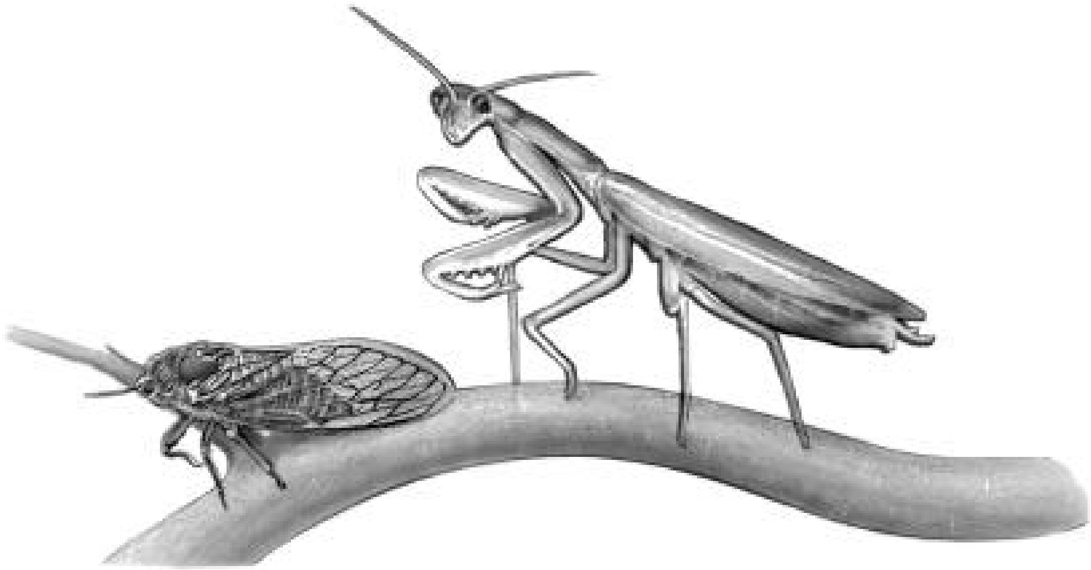
Once when she was young, she tried to save a cicada from being eaten by a praying mantis, but she tripped and fell, knocking her head against a stone. This left a red scar in the middle of her forehead. People used to say, "What a pity! A scar on such a beautiful face," but Guanyin did not care. She only wanted to help others and make their lives better.

One night the Buddha appeared to Guanyin in a dream. He told her that on a faraway mountaintop, she would find a magic lotus flower and a little medicine vase made of a white stone called jade. "Go fetch these treasures," said the Buddha, "for then you will be able to help all people who are suffering."

The next morning, Guanyin set off for the long journey to find the magic lotus flower and the medicine vase on the mystical mountain. Guanyin's family didn't want her to go, and when she did, they missed her greatly.

The journey was long and hard. On the way, Guanyin gave away her food to hungry birds, so she lived on wild berries and nuts. Then Guanyin offered her shoes to a poor person. For the rest of her journey she went barefoot. Stones cut her feet, and they bled.

At last she reached India and found the mountain in her dream, where the magic lotus flower and the little jade medicine vase could be found. The mountain was very steep and covered with snow and ice, but Guanyin struggled to the top.



When she arrived at the top of the mountain, the Buddha appeared to her. "You are indeed a kind and thoughtful person. Here is the magic lotus flower and the little white jade medicine vase." The Buddha then told Guanyin to take them back to the temple in her home village and to live there as a nun. "When water appears in the vase and a willow branch grows from it, on that day you will rise up to Heaven," he told her.

Guanyin did as the Buddha instructed. She returned home and became a nun. She placed the little white jade vase on the temple altar and planted the lotus flower in the temple pond. She continued to help people who were suffering. Word of her kindness traveled far, and many people came to the temple to ask for Guanyin's assistance.

One day, a friend of Guanyin told some people the story about the vase and how when it filled with water and a willow grew from it, Guanyin would rise up to Heaven. Upon hearing this, a naughty boy named Shenying decided to play a trick on everyone. That night when the temple was empty, he poured water into the vase and placed a willow branch in it.

The next morning, everyone was excited. "Look, there is water and a willow growing in the vase" they said. Shenying laughed to himself. Guanyin sat down by the pond and started to pray. Soon, there was music in the air, and the lotus flower began to open. It got

bigger and bigger until it was almost as large as the pond itself. Guanyin stepped onto the lotus flower. Then slowly, the lotus started carrying her into the sky. Everyone was amazed, especially Shenying. As the lotus flower reached the clouds, Guanyin looked down at him. "Thank you, little boy," she said, and she flew into Heaven to become the Bodhisattva of Compassion, so she could forever continue to help people in need.



Objects of Chinese Buddhist Art

Standing bodhisattva holding a lotus bud

China, Henan Province, Northern Qi dynasty (550–577)

Limestone

173.3 cm.

Gift of Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer F1968.45

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Lotus

Many varieties of the lotus flower grow in water in South and Southeast Asia. The lotus became a symbol of Buddhism and enlightenment because its beauty emerges from muddy water. Just as a lotus rises from the mud through water toward sunlight, one seeking enlightenment moves from ignorance toward full presence of mind.

The lotus has also come to represent purity and is associated with the Buddha's infancy. According to one Buddhist myth, when the Buddha took his first seven steps, seven lotus flowers sprang from the earth under his feet.

The lotus is a recurring symbol in Buddhist art. The Buddha and other Buddhist figures are often depicted sitting on large lotus blossoms (see bosatsu, page 43) or holding lotus flowers in their hands (see the standing bodhisattva holding a lotus bud, page 31).



Photograph by A.Garborino

This sculpture of a bodhisattva, or enlightened being, is from Xiangtangshan (pronounced she-ang tahng shan), a well-known archaeological site in China where many Buddhist chapels were built into mountainside caves. Holding an offering of a lotus bud, this figure would have stood next to an image of the Buddha. Its almost rigid dignity and somewhat introspective expression are characteristic of the high artistic accomplishment of the Xiangtangshan sculptors. The figure wears a skirt, or dhoti, fastened at the waist by a knotted sash. The cloth falls in a fluid, simple manner, forming a scalloped pattern with its hem. The bodhisattva's upper body is partially covered by a long stole draped around the shoulders and alongside the body. The deity also wears a simple but heavy necklace. The presence of jewelry often distinguishes an image of the Buddha from that of a bodhisattva. Since the Buddha rejected earthly wealth, he is never shown wearing any form of jewelry. A bodhisattva, on the other hand, is usually crowned or bejeweled because he chose to return to earth to assist others in attaining salvation.



The headdress consists of three parts, with ribbons descending over the shoulders and mingling with the carefully placed strands of hair. The rough surface found on the back of this bodhisattva indicates that the sculpture was originally attached to a wall in one of the caves at Xiangtangshan.

Objects of Chinese Buddhist Art

Buddhist altarpiece

China, Sui Dynasty, 597

Gilt bronze

32.1 x 14.1 cm.

Gift of Charles Lang Freer F1914.21

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

These three gold-covered figures share a low platform and stand atop pedestals within a few inches of one another. The figures in this altarpiece include a central standing Buddha flanked by standing bodhisattvas. The upper bodies and pointed halos of all three incline forward slightly. This impression of active involvement is reinforced by the smiling, friendly expressions on their faces. The central Buddha's hands are in the Abhaya mudra ("fear not"), and his simple monastic robes clearly contrast with the elaborate gowns of the bodhisattvas. The smaller figures wear intricate headdresses with long ribbons and scarves that seem to flow alongside their willowy bodies.

The central Buddha's physique and adornment are simple in comparison. He stands upon an inverted lotus that fits into an elaborate base, which, in turn, fits onto a low, rectangular stand. In contrast, the bodhisattvas stand on long-stemmed lotuses that project out from the rectangular base into space. A long inscription on the front of the pedestal reads: "On the twenty-fourth day of the tenth month in the seventeenth year of Kaihuang [December 8, 597], donor Wu...had an image made." The inscription then goes on to list the fifteen donors after "donor Wu," two of whom were women of some standing in the imperial court, and many of whom share the same family name.



Guanyin of Eleven Heads

China, Shaanxi Province, Tang dynasty, ca. 703

Limestone

108.8 x 31.7 x 15.3 cm.

Gift of Charles Lang Freer F1909.98

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Guanyin, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, holds a flower in his raised right hand and grasps the end of a long scarf with his left hand. The deity wears a thin skirt, or dhoti, tied around the hips, and jeweled arm rings and necklaces adorn the body. The sensuous style of the sculpture reflects the influence of Indian art in China.


detail

The hair is arranged into a high cone, and ten small bodhisattva heads are scattered throughout the hair (see detail at left). The heads represent different stages on the path to enlightenment, while Guanyin's head stands for its final attainment. The halo and the two celestial beings flying overhead refer to divine radiance and enlightenment. Guanyin stands upon a lotus flower pedestal, a symbol of purity and divinity.

Guanyin is one of a few bodhisattvas that became an independent deity and attracted a following, much as the Buddha himself did. Guanyin is of great importance in the realm of Chinese Buddhism. This sculpture once adorned the Seven Jewels Pagoda, which was built in the Tang dynasty (618–907) capital, present-day Xi'an.



Japanese Buddhism: Selective Adaptation

By the time Buddhism arrived in Japan from Korea and China in the mid-sixth century, nearly a thousand years had passed since the **Buddha** lived on earth. The religion had grown, evolved, and spread throughout Asia, developing a rich diversity of imagery and beliefs. The Japanese continued this process of modifying Buddhism to fit their particular cultural preferences.

Two main stages mark the development of Buddhism in Japan. First, from the sixth through the twelfth century, the governing regime used Buddhism as part of a strategy to centralize control. Within one generation of its introduction into Japan, Buddhism became the official state religion. It took a few more centuries for the Buddhist belief system to permeate society and truly coexist with native **Shinto** beliefs. By the eighth century, the two religions existed in relative integrated harmony. At this initial stage, imagery used in both Buddhist painting and sculpture reflected the tastes of the social elite. The majestic and awe-inspiring images tended to focus on divine hierarchies, meditative paths to **enlightenment,** perceptions of **afterlife,** and similar themes. The development of Japanese Buddhist culture and art was also greatly influenced by Tang dynasty (618–907) China, which was in the midst of a golden age. All of Asia emulated China during this time of peace, cultural and artistic achievement, and intellectual activity. Japanese Buddhist schools established close ties with Chinese schools, for example, and for a time the many students and teachers who traveled between China and Japan exchanged Buddhist ideas and art.

Shinto, "The Way of the Gods"

Shinto beliefs may be as ancient as the Japanese people themselves, extending back thousands of years. Its doctrine is based on the idea that *kami* (literally, sacred power) is present in living as well as in inanimate objects. Thus, kami can reside with one's ancestors or in a sacred place, such as a special cave or a mountain stream. Early Shinto practices varied widely by region, and individuals worshiped and received protection from their local kami.

The second major stage in the development of Japanese Buddhism occurred in the late twelfth century, when political control shifted from the imperial court to a rising warrior class. During this period of unrest, two major Buddhist movements gained prominence: popular forms of Buddhism adopted by ordinary people and **Zen** Buddhism (Chan, in Chinese), which had been imported from China.

In the popular Buddhist schools, Japanese worshipers preferred images with visual narratives stressing the compassionate and approachable nature of the Buddhist gods. These narratives recorded the founding of certain temples or told the life stories of saints and related how the divine miraculously intervened in everyday life. *Amida Buddha,*


CHINA
RUSSIA
Hokkaido
NORTH
KOREA
SEA OF
JAPAN
SOUTH
KOREA
Honshu
JAPAN
Tokyo
Kyoto
Mt. Fuji
Osaka
Shikoku
Kyushu
EAST
CHINA
SEA
PACIFIC
OCEAN
Ryukyu
Islands

JAPAN

Haiku

Haiku is an unrhymed poem with three lines of text when translated into english—the first of five syllables, the second of seven syllables, and the third of five syllables—although the seventeen-syllable pattern is often lost when translated (see below). It emerged in the sixteenth century, but it did not become popular until a century later, when Basho (1644–1694), a famous Japanese traveler and student of Zen Buddhism, wrote prolifically in the form. Basho is recognized as the master of haiku, and his ability to infuse verse with subtle allusions led to haiku being widely adopted as a discipline in the study of Zen Buddhist philosophy. Haiku written after the seventeenth century deals almost exclusively with nature as a metaphor for reflection and usually includes a word or phrase that refers to one of the four seasons.

Lightning gleams
and a night heron's shriek
travels into darkness
—Basho

Blown from the west
fallen leaves gather
in the east
—Basho

This phantasm
of falling petals vanishes into
moon and flowers
—Okyo

Attended by Kannon and Seishi, Welcoming Souls to Paradise (page 45) demonstrates this involvement of the divine in everyday life.

By the thirteenth century, in addition to having a new warrior class in control of the government, Japan suddenly experienced a significant influx of Chinese Zen monks. These monks had fled their homeland as a result of the persecution of Buddhism under the newly established Mongol regime in China. The Japanese ruling class of warriors was drawn to the stark, rigorous aspects of Zen that emphasized teachings transmitted from master to disciple (rather than depending on texts or pictures) and enlightenment through **meditation.** An entirely new genre of art forms was deeply affected by Japanese acceptance of Zen beginning in the thirteenth century. These art forms were simpler, often reflected nature, and encompassed a wide array of pursuits, including **haiku** poetry, painting, gardening, flower arranging, archery, and the tea ceremony.

Buddha or Bodhisattva?

After reaching enlightenment, **bodhisattvas** ("bosatu" in Japanese) choose to be reborn and return to earth to help others find their path to enlightenment. These earthbound beings, who have not yet entered nirvana ("nehan" in Japanese), are usually shown wearing earthly riches, such as jewels, crowns, and elaborate clothing. The Buddha, on the other hand, has attained enlightenment and passed on to nirvana and is always shown in simple monastic clothes with no jewelry. This plain appearance symbolizes the Buddha's rejection of earthly riches and his complete detachment from this world. It is easy to discern the bejeweled bodhisattvas from the simply clad Buddha in the scroll *Amida Buddha, Attended by Kannon and Seishi, Welcoming Souls to Paradise* (page 45). The two bodhisattvas in the Buddhist altarpiece (page 33) are similarly discernible from the more simply clad Buddha of the trio.



BODHISATTVA



BUDDHA

Guardian figures

Japan, Kamakura period (1185–1333)

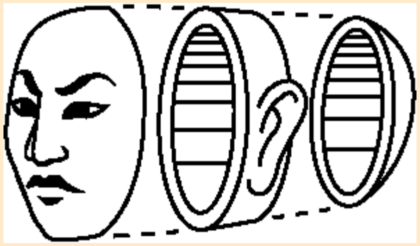
Wood

226.4 cm. (F1949.20), 233.5 cm. (F1949.21)

Purchase F1949.20 and .21

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

These powerful figures with ferocious expressions are "guardian" images that once flanked the entrance gate to a Buddhist temple near Osaka, Japan. Such guardians are meant to ward off evil spirits and protect the sacred ground of the temple. The practice of placing guardian figures at a temple entrance has origins in a legend about the Buddha, which says powerful guardians attended him as he taught and traveled throughout India. In China and Japan, these guardian figures frequently appear in pairs, often in the form of larger-than-life, half-naked warriors who raise their clenched fists and sometimes hold weapons. These particular statues were once painted dark red, but the color has worn off due to centuries of exposure as they stood guard at the temple gates.



The Japanese produced Buddhist images in wood that range in size from monumental statues to miniature, devotional images intended for portable shrines. Many times figures were not carved from one piece of wood; rather, numerous uniquely shaped wooden blocks were seamlessly joined together without the use of metal (see illustration). For example, the heads of these guardians consist of three separate pieces: the mask or face, the back of the head, and a hollow ring on the sides of which are the ears.





Objects of Japanese Buddhist Art

Bosatsu

Japan, Heian period (794–1185)

Wood

Image, 98.0 x 75.0 x 50.8 cm.; overall, 206 x 114.0 x 114.0 cm.

Purchase F1962.21

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

This wood sculpture represents a bodhisattva (*bosatsu* in Japanese) seated in meditation on a lotus-shaped pedestal. The halo behind the figure still shows traces of its original gold-leaf decoration. Both the bodhisattva's facial expression and the hand gesture are intended to convey reassurance and peace. This figure, which would have been placed on the altar of a Buddhist temple, exemplifies the simple, elegant style prevalent in Japanese Buddhist sculpture late in the Heian period. The wooden figure consists of seven separate parts. The elaborate lotus-shaped pedestal is made of eight components, but it was not a part of the original design for this statue. The entire figure was once covered with black lacquer and gold leaf, which have worn away over the past thousand years.



Amida Buddha, Attended by Kannon and Seishi, Welcoming Souls to Paradise

Japan, Kamakura (1185–1333) or Muromachi (1333–1573) period

Hanging scroll; color and gold on silk

110.0 x 49.3 cm.

Purchase F1954.9

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Japanese belief in salvation by the Buddha of Infinite Light, who was known as Amida in Japan, reached its height during the Kamakura period of warrior rule. Amida was believed to descend to earth at the moment of a person's death to greet the soul and carry it to paradise, where it would be reborn. Two or more bodhisattvas often accompanied Amida.

Buddhist priests frequently carried paintings such as this one to a believer's deathbed as a final assurance of salvation. This painting depicts Amida Buddha welcoming the souls of the faithful into paradise. Amida is the central figure; his two attendants — the bodhisattvas Kannon and Seishi — form the base of the triangular composition. Amida stands with his right hand raised in the Abhaya mudra, a hand gesture that means "fear not." His left arm is lowered in a welcoming mudra. The combination of these two gestures — the raised hand represents the heavenly realm and the lowered hand the earthly world — suggests that Amida is capable of saving both those in the heavens and those on earth.

Below her left hand is the smaller figure of the bodhisattva Kannon. Her body is turned and bent slightly forward, and she holds a lotus blossom in her hands, upon which she will receive the faithful souls. The deity wears a crown and many jewels in typical bodhisattva tradition. The bodhisattva Seishi to Amida's right forms the third corner of the pyramid. The same size as Kannon, Seishi is similarly clothed and bejeweled and is depicted in a similar stance of humble devotion. Seishi differs from Kannon, however, in that the hands are pressed together with her fingers extended in front of the chest in a mudra of prayer and devotion.



Buddhism Today

Buddhism is currently practiced by over three hundred million people worldwide. Founded in India in the sixth century B.C.E., its practice had diminished there by the twelfth century, partly due to the gradual absorption of Buddhist figures and beliefs into the Hindu tradition and the introduction of Islam. Today there are very few Buddhists in India.

Asia is now home to most of the world's Buddhist population. The practice of Buddhism spread from India to the East, and currently China, Japan, Korea, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Tibet, and Thailand all have large Buddhist populations. Perhaps the Buddhist traditions best known to Westerners are Japan's Zen Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism.

Buddhism is also practiced outside Asia. Academic scholarship and East Asian immigrants to the western United States introduced Buddhism to this country in the mid-nineteenth century. During the 1960s, Asian aesthetics, music, and religious traditions became popular in Europe and North America. This influx of Asian culture generated great interest in Buddhist thought among people of non-Asian descent.

Here are interviews with four practicing Buddhists from the Washington, D.C., area. These interviews reflect the diversity in background, tradition, and perspective of those who practice Buddhism today.



La Tasha Harris

is a textile conservator who is currently working on the Star Spangled Banner Preservation Project at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. She has been a practicing Buddhist of the Tibetan Gelupa tradition since 1996. Ms. Harris feels that Buddhism answers spiritual questions that were not addressed in her former faith. In this interview, she speaks about the challenges that her practice presents and the way Buddhism has helped her to recognize how all things are interconnected.

When I lived in New York City, I developed a friendship with a woman who moved into the apartment downstairs from mine. One night I went to meet her for dinner, and she was dressed in her nun's robes. It had never come up in conversation that she was a nun. She was the first Buddhist that I'd ever met, or that I knew I'd met. It started a different set of conversations for us. At that point in my life there were issues of spirituality that had emerged, and the traditional faith I had grown up with answered the "hows" more

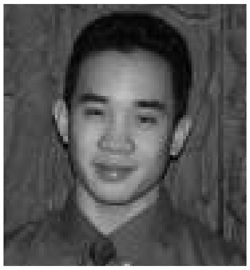
often than the “whys.” That wasn’t enough for me. From what I could see, and what she told me, a lot of her “whys” were getting answered. My interest in Buddhism evolved from there.

Recently, I’ve had to deal with my grandmother having knee replacement surgery, and my mother having a heart attack and going through a depression due to that heart attack. I think that the teachings of Buddhism have given me a better foundation to be a resource for them. My mother had a lot to deal with when she was really sick and had to make a lot of choices. Through Buddhism, I could give her another way of approaching or defining the situations around her.

I think that I’m at an advantage and at a disadvantage finding Buddhism as an adult. I don’t get it right a lot of the time, and I’m still very new at this, but I like that it’s work. It allows me to interact with my faith and not just have it handed down to me. In this tradition, you don’t have to accept anything you’re given. You’re allowed to let it “cook,” to analyze it based on meditation and what you see happening in your world.

I engage with my faith constantly to keep it current. There are vows you take that make you a Buddhist. I check my vows every two-and-a-half hours throughout the day. I pull out a little book and I pick six vows for the day. Then I evaluate how well I’m keeping them during that day. Doing this forces me to take time and sit with myself and not hold on to angry or upsetting thoughts.

I think it’s important for people to realize that you can be Buddhist and anything else. I know people who are Jewish and Buddhist; I know people who belong to other faiths and are Buddhist. If you want to approach Buddhism that way, it’s just a way of integrating more of your faith into your daily life. It’s a way of engaging with it more. It forces you to look at yourself, and the way you interact with others, in a different way. The longer you study, the harder it is to think of any person you encounter, or any event in your life, as incidental. There is nothing in your world that is causeless, so you become conscious of trying to plant seeds that will cause more beautiful things to flower in your world for yourself and the people around you.



Ryan Pijai

is a senior in high school at Georgetown Day School in Washington, D.C. He attends Wat Thai (Thai Temple) in Silver Spring, Maryland, where he is a member of a traditional Thai orchestra. Ryan feels that Buddhism enables him to approach activities mindfully and to be aware of the consequences of his actions.

Because both of my parents are Buddhists, I was born one. My parents are from Thailand, so they took me to the Wat Thai temple in Silver Spring at a very young age. There I attended Sunday and summer school with other kids. In the mornings, we learned to pray in the ancient Bali language. During the daytime, aside from learning Thai, we also learned Buddhism as part of Thai culture. We spent a portion of each day in the Buddhist monastery meditating. I recall the meditation songs we were taught, because as children our minds would constantly wander as we sat in silence. I remember the pain I would feel in my toes as I sat properly to pray — most likely another method of keeping one focused on the present. Growing up as a Buddhist, the religion seemed simple to me, and yet very practical. There were no leaps of faith I had to take. There were no supernatural occurrences I had to believe in. Buddhism was basically a philosophy for life.

As a Buddhist, I am not required to go to the temple at any specific time or day. I am always welcomed there and encouraged to join in daily chants and to speak with monks. Occasionally, I attend religious ceremonies, for example, to celebrate Visakha Puja, a celebration of the birth, enlightenment, and passing away of the Buddha. After the ceremonies, the abbot gives sermons to the public, which further explain the teachings of the Buddha.

Everything I learn about Buddhism can be applied to my daily life. I practice Buddhism by being kind and helpful to others and by being mindful of everything I do. Meditation has taught me to focus on my daily activities and not to be careless. Even when I study for exams, I use meditation to help me do well. Through Buddhism, I have learned the true meaning of cause and effect. I use Buddhism to help me reach my fullest potential.

The ultimate goal of being a Buddhist is to stop all sufferings, such as sorrow, hatred, distress, and anxiety. I know that these sufferings are detrimental to my health and that the only way I can overcome them is by accepting them and moving on. The three basic teachings of Buddhism have always been a guide for me.

1. Refrain from doing bad deeds.
2. Perform good deeds.
3. Purify one's mind.

The basic premise of Buddhism is the belief that one who performs good merit will be rewarded, while one who performs the opposite will suffer from the consequences. I have taken that to heart and use it as a rationale for conducting myself appropriately. Buddhism guides me spiritually and physically to do what is right. I will be very proud to teach my children the Buddhist way of life.



Kennon Nakamura

is the Director of Congressional Affairs for the American Foreign Service Association. He is one of the founders, and current president, of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple, a temple of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist tradition, where he has taught Sunday school since 1978. In this interview, Mr. Nakamura shares how Buddhist practice helps him stay conscious of how his actions and interactions are affected by his individual perspective. He also recounts the experience of challenging an assumption about what constitutes religious common knowledge.

My parents and grandparents were Buddhists. My grandparents came from Japan, and my parents were born in California. They were both active in Buddhism and Buddhist churches prior to World War II. During the war they were relocated to an internment camp in Arkansas. There they helped set up Buddhist *sanghas* [religious communities] in their camps.

After the war, a large group of Japanese-Americans set up a community in Seabrook, New Jersey, and my parents helped establish the Buddhist church there, so I grew up in a Buddhist tradition. I suppose for some people, if you grow up in a tradition, you fall into it and continue on. Some people, after time, come to a question of, "Do I really buy this?" I came to that point and I decided, "Yes, I do buy it," so I stayed.

My kids have also grown up as Buddhists. When my daughter Maya was in high school, one of her teachers was talking about the Lord's Prayer, so she asked Maya to lead it. Maya didn't know what she was talking about, and she felt embarrassed. She told me about this, so I called the teacher. I said, "You know, I don't know how many times you think Maya's been exposed to the Lord's Prayer." She said, "They recite it in a lot of places. Kiwanis,* for instance." I said, "I don't think my daughter goes to Kiwanis meetings very often." People have certain assumptions, and so times like this may be awkward.

People have misconceptions about what Buddhism is, so you have a choice of trying to

correct a misconception or ignoring it, depending on how you feel at the time. I think we Buddhists have things to offer society at large. For me, there is peace of mind about the future and an awareness of how I relate to the world. I recognize the strength of my ego (my individual perspectives and actions) and what kinds of problems it creates for me. There is an analogy of an ocean and a wave in which the wave comes crashing to the shore. When we view ourselves as the wave, we feel that we are absolutely individual. In reality, however, the wave has always been part of the ocean. In our tradition, we remind ourselves that we are part of a greater whole, just as the wave is a part of the ocean. It's just that from our own perspective, because of our ego, we don't recognize that.

Going to the temple is like holding up a mirror to yourself. You never know if your face is dirty unless you look into a mirror. I would like to think that a lot of the thoughts, philosophy, and perspectives of our tradition are ingrained in our lives. But when you go to the temple, and you listen to the Dharma talk [the talk about the Buddha's doctrines], you think, "Wow, maybe we need some more work here." The important part is how it affects the way you live your life.

*Kiwanis is an international service organization founded in the United States in the early twentieth century.



Anh Ho

is a senior in high school at Langley High School in McLean, Virginia. He will attend college this fall, where he plans to major in biology or chemistry. For Anh, Buddhism serves as an ethical system for daily life. As a first-generation Vietnamese-American, he feels Buddhism helps him maintain his relationship with Vietnamese culture.

My parents never pushed Buddhism on me as a religion. Though I practiced, I classified myself as a Christian because my parents sent me to a Christian preschool. It wasn't until I took ninth grade world history and learned about different religions that I changed my label to Buddhism. To me, it's not so much a religion as a philosophy, a way to live one's life.

Aspects of Buddhism have always been apparent in my life, although they have been subtle, almost unconscious. It was in the way my parents carried themselves, the way they would punish me when I was bad or made mistakes, but it was never labeled a religion. It's a way of living, not a belief in Buddha or any kind of god.

Buddhism keeps me connected to my culture. With my parents at work, I couldn't pick up the Vietnamese language as readily as a few of my Vietnamese friends. Most children of Vietnamese parents can speak Vietnamese. I can't read it or speak it. I can understand more now because I'm paying more attention to what my parents are saying as the language becomes more important in my life. I've never been to Vietnam, although I hope to travel there soon. Buddhism is a way of reminding myself of who I am. However, I don't want to focus solely on my culture and block out American culture. I'm trying to keep the middle ground between American culture and my own, so Buddhism is one of those things I would like to hold on to.

The most meaningful thing to me in my practice is remembering my ancestors.* The only one I knew was my grandmother. She passed away when I was in fifth grade. I couldn't get to know her very well because of the language barrier. She spoke only Vietnamese and I spoke only English. So, to compensate for that, I pray to her in our shrine in the attic and ask her for prosperity and to protect my family. There are photographs to represent the spirits of each of my ancestors. There is one picture of my grandmother, another of my aunt and two of my uncles who were killed during the Vietnam War. In a sense I'm praying to all of them, but I didn't know any of them. I really didn't know my grandmother, and that's one of the things I regret the most about my childhood.

I try to do what I feel is right. I believe that not everyone is perfect. People will make mistakes at times, and they have to compensate for that by doing other good things. As a child, I was always mean to my little brother, so right now I try to compensate for that by helping him out. Buddhism is like a manual. There are decisions I make as a student, as a brother, as a son that are guided by Buddhism. If I look back on the decisions I make, I can see Buddhist philosophical influences.

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*While this packet does not address ancestor worship as an aspect of Buddhist practice, Anh Ho finds it to be an important part of his spiritual life. The worship of ancestors is widespread in East and Southeast Asia.

Discussion Questions

Grade Level: High School

1. La Tasha Harris became a Buddhist as an adult. How did she become interested in Buddhism? According to Ms. Harris, what are some of the challenges she faced by adopting a faith when she was already an adult? What are the advantages?

2. In his interview, Ryan Pijai speaks of how Buddhism keeps him aware of the present moment, focused and mindful of his actions. What does it mean to do something mindfully? What things do you feel you must do mindfully and with focus? Why do some things require focus and not others? Can you imagine doing everything mindfully? What would that be like?

3. Kennon Nakamura recounts his discussion with a teacher who asked his daughter to lead her class in the Lord's Prayer. What do you think about the teacher's response to Mr. Nakamura? Have you ever been in a position where you were expected to know culturally specific information you did not know? How did you feel? How can we avoid these kinds of misunderstandings?

4. Anh Ho sees practicing Buddhism as one way to stay connected to Vietnamese culture. At the same time, he does not want to reject American culture. What kinds of difficulties might Anh face because of his connection to these two cultures? How can he maintain the "middle ground" that he desires? Have you ever felt that you had to balance two such important aspects of your life? What were the problems you faced? What were the rewards?

Many words in this vocabulary list are Sanskrit, Chinese, or Japanese in origin. Pronunciation is given in parenthesis where necessary.

bodhisattva (bow-dee-saht-fah): an enlightened being who chooses not to proceed to nirvana but instead remains on earth to guide others in their paths toward enlightenment. (*bosatsu* in Japanese)*

Buddha: the "enlightened one"; first known as Siddhartha Gautama (ca. 563–ca. 483 B.C.E), a wealthy prince who gave up his family and earthly possessions to find a way to end suffering in the world.

circumambulation: an act of worship often practiced in Buddhism (and other faiths) that involves walking around a holy place, such as a stupa.

Confucianism: based on the philosophy of Confucius (Kong fuzi, 551–479 B.C.E.) that rulers have a responsibility to secure happiness for their subjects and that the family is the model for all human relationships.

Daoism: Chinese set of beliefs based on the *Dao de jing,* a book traditionally attributed to the philosopher Laozi (sixth century B.C.E.), but most likely written by different authors some time in the third century B.C.E.; philosophy propounds an ideal state of freedom from desire that can be achieved by following the *dao,* the natural path of the universe.

Eightfold Path: the basic moral teachings of Buddhism, the goal of which is to stop all suffering in the world (see page 9).

enlightenment: a moment of great wisdom and understanding; the highest level of consciousness, believed to be attained through meditation and adhering to the principles of the Eightfold Path; the ultimate goal of Buddhism.

Four Great Miracles: the four main events in the Buddha's life: the miracle of the Buddha's birth, the Buddha's enlightenment, his first sermon at Deer Park at Sarnath, and the Buddha's death.

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*The "f" sound is pronounced as a "v" or a "w" in India.

Four Noble Truths: Buddhist philosophy on how to overcome endless suffering by attaining enlightenment (see page 8).

meditation: a step on the Eightfold Path; practice involves quieting the mind and focusing on the present moment in order to detach oneself from the distractions of the world (see page 7).

Middle Way: seeking a balance by rejecting the extremes of wanting everything and giving up everything.

monk: a male follower of Buddhism or any religion, who gives up worldly life to pursue a purely religious life. The place where many monks live together in a community is called a monastery. Women who give up worldly life to pursue a purely religoius Buddhist life are known as nuns.

mudra (moo-drah): symbolic hand gestures with special meaning often seen in artistic depictions of the Buddha and other Buddhist figures (see page 10).

nirvana (near-vah-nah): a spiritual state of perfect peace beyond selfish attachments to worldly possessions; reaching nirvana frees the soul from the Buddhist cycle of rebirth.

parinirvana: the place where nirvana is attained.

pilgrimage: a journey to a place of great spiritual significance, such as a stupa or a site the Buddha visited during his lifetime. A person who makes this journey is called a pilgrim.

relic: an object venerated because of its association with a holy person's life or body (i.e., bones, pieces of clothing, hair, begging bowl).

Sanskrit: the literary and sacred language of ancient India. Many ancient Buddhist texts were written in this language.

Shintoism: the ancient, native Japanese belief system that kami, or natural spirits, are omnipresent (see page 36).

shogunate: a form of Japanese military government established in the twelfth century.

Siddhartha (sid-har-ta): the prince who after, in his attainment of enlightenment, became known as the Buddha.

stupa (stoo-pah): a domed religious structure that contains relics of the Buddha or other holy persons. It is a site of worship and pilgrimage (see page 12).

sutra (sue-trah): a Buddhist holy writing or text.

ushnisha (oosh-neesh-ah): a bump on the top of the Buddha's head that symbolizes his superior knowledge.

urna (ur-nah): a dot on the Buddha's forehead that indicates his special wisdom.

wheel of dharma: a symbol of Buddhist law (dharma) found in the Eightfold Path (see page 11).

Zen: a Japanese school of Buddhism that emphasizes direct transmission of teaching enlightenment from master to student. It downplays the study of religious texts and performance of rituals as a means to enlightenment.

Lesson Plans

On the following pages you will find four lesson plans written by teachers using the material in this guide. Each lesson was implemented in the classroom and examples of the students work are included.

Lesson Plan 1

On the following pages you will find four lesson plans written by teachers using the material in this guide. Each lesson was implemented in the classroom and examples of the students' work are included.

This lesson includes:

> a short summary of the life of the Buddha
> quiz worksheet
> an example of student work

LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

Contributed by Toni Conklin, third grade teacher, Bancroft Elementary School, Washington, D.C.

Subjects: Language Arts/Art
Grade level: Elementary School
Time needed: Three to four 40-minute class periods

Goal

To learn about the life of the Buddha and write a description of the seated Buddha statue (page 23).

Objectives

> The teacher will read the book *Buddha* by Susan L. Roth to the students, and they will retell the story in their own words.
> Students will demonstrate an understanding of the choices Siddhartha made and be able to connect them to choices they make in their own lives.
> Students will be able to articulate an important question Siddhartha had about the world before he became the Buddha, and they will explain how he found the answer.
> Students will recognize the physical characteristics that identify a figure as a Buddah. (e.g., hair, clothes, ears, head, etc.).
> Students will write a description and create their own detailed, colored picture of the seated Buddha statue after looking at its image in this packet and/or after viewing it at the museum.

Vocabulary

enlightenment: a moment of great wisdom or understanding; the highest level of consciousness, believed to be attained through meditation and adhering to the principles of the Eightfold Path; the ultimate goal of Buddhism.

lotus flower: a beautiful flower that rises from muddy water to blossom above the water's surface. According to the Buddha, like the lotus, people can rise above their desire for things to overcome suffering and live an enlightened life (see page 30).

meditation: thinking deeply and quietly for a long time to find answers within oneself (see page 7).

mudra: a symbolic hand gesture with special meaning often found on artistic depictions of the Buddha and other Buddhist figures (see page 10).

symbol: a sign, drawing, or word that represents an idea or an act.

urna: a dot on the Buddha's forehead that symbolizes his special wisdom.

ushnisha: a bump on the crown of the Buddha's head that represents his superior knowledge.

Materials

A children's book that tells the story of Siddhartha (the author of this lesson uses *Buddha* by Susan L. Roth; see Books for Young Readers, page 89); image of the seated Buddha (page 23); paper, pencils, colored pencils, crayons, and markers.

Motivation and Discussion

> Use examples of famous statues that the students recognize (the Statue of Liberty, the Lincoln Memorial, or other statues in your local area) and ask, "Can a statue tell a story? What story does each of these statues tell?" Refer to images you choose.

> Have the students sit quietly, perhaps in the lotus position like the seated Buddha, and talk about their lives. If they were a statue, how would an artist render them? What moment in their lives would make a good statue (e.g., scoring a goal in soccer, reading their favorite book, jumping rope)? What pose would express their personality and true nature?

Lesson Plan 1

> Siddhartha decided to leave his comfortable palace and become a homeless person in order to think and learn about suffering. What important choices have the students made in their lives thus far? Have the students interview a family member or a classmate about choices others have made. Write a brief paragraph about those choices. Focus on how those choices have changed their lives.

Activities

1. Listen to the story of Siddhartha as told in the book *Buddha* by Susan L. Roth or another book of your choice on the life of the Buddha (see reference list on page 88). Ask students to retell the story and explain the choices Siddhartha made, which important question he asked, what answer he found, and what changes he experienced. For reinforcement, give students the attached summary of this story (page 60) to read on their own. Then give them the short quiz (page 62) to assess their understanding.
2. Have students look at the image of the seated Buddha (page 23) and discuss what they see. Make a chart with four columns to record and categorize the students' answers (see below for column headings and possible answers).

Marks

(physical characteristics that distinguish the Buddha)

> long earlobes (giving up his earthly wealth)
> ushnisha: bump on his head (superior knowledge)

Actions or Poses

(how the hands, body, and feet of the seated Buddha are positioned)

> lotus position
> right hand touching ground

Senses

(attributes of the seated Buddha related to sight, touch, etc.)

> smooth surface
> bright, golden

Comparisons

(compare the seated Buddha with another statue of a human figure)

> peaceful expression
> clothing

For a detailed explanation of the meaning of the Buddha's special attributes (e.g., long earlobes, bump on his head, dot on the forehead, etc., see the description of the seated Buddha on page 22).

3. Discuss how the seated Buddha represents the story of the Buddha's life and what physical characteristics identify the figure as a Buddah. For example: Why does his hair appear this way? Why is his clothing made of patchwork material? Why does his hand touch the earth? What do the dot on his forehead and the bump on his head mean?
4. Use the list from the second activity to write a description of the statue. Give students a list of details to include, such as symbols, descriptive words, actions, and comparisons. Encourage students to open their description with a question or a sentence that grabs the reader's attention and interest. Have them "process" their writing by editing it with their peers. Attach a drawing of the statue to their final essays.

Assessment

> Is the student able to participate actively in a discussion of the story of the Buddha and retell it orally?
> Can the student discuss the choices Siddhartha made in his life and connect them to choices in her/his own life?
> Can the student answer the question about the cause of suffering that Siddhartha asked before becoming the Buddha and explain the answer he found?
> Is the student able to recognize the physical characteristics that identify the figure as the Buddha?
> Does the description of the seated Buddha meet the criteria that were set regarding which details to include? Is it neatly written? Does the colored picture of the statue show some of the details discussed above?

Lesson Plan 1

The Story of the Buddha

A summary based on Buddha *by Susan L. Roth*

Long ago, a queen named Maya was told that she would have a son who would become either a powerful ruler or a holy man. Soon after hearing this, her son Siddhartha was born. Siddhartha grew up as a prince. He learned to read, write, ride a horse and an elephant, and play many games. He lived in a beautiful palace with gardens full of fountains and flowers, and he had delicious food to eat every day.

Even with all this, Siddhartha asked many questions about the world outside the palace walls. His father, the king, worried that he would go outside the walls and see the way the rest of the world lived, and perhaps he would want to leave the palace and become a holy man. In India at that time, holy men led very difficult lives. They gave up many things and often were cold, hungry, and lonely. Siddhartha's father found a wife for his son and hoped she would keep him happy inside the palace. In a few years, Siddhartha seemed so content with his new wife and a baby of his own on the way that the king decided to let him go outside the palace walls, accompanied by a servant.

On his first trip outside, Siddhartha saw a very old man. "Why is he so bent and thin?" Siddhartha asked his companion. The servant said that this is what happens when we get old. Siddhartha had never seen such an old man before, and he thought about him all the way home. He kept asking himself, "What can I do to help that old man? How can I live happily in a rich palace when he cannot even stand up straight?"

On his second ride outside the palace walls, Siddhartha saw a sick man. He wanted to know, "Why does he shake, and why are his eyes so red?" The servant told him that he was sick. Siddhartha had never seen a sick man before, and he kept wishing he could help him. The young prince also felt terrible about leaving the sick man alone on the streets all night.

The third time he went outside, Siddhartha saw a funeral procession. His servant told him that everyone dies eventually. Having never before heard of death, Siddhartha could not imagine how awful it might be to die.

That evening, Siddhartha kept crying because of all the troubles in the world. The king was afraid that his son might become a holy man after all, for holy men try to help people who suffer. So early the next morning, the king ran to tell the servant not to take his son

out of the palace ever again. It was too late — they had already left the palace for the fourth time.

On Siddhartha's fourth trip outside the walls, he saw a holy man sitting under a tree. The young prince asked the holy man why he just sat quietly while there was so much suffering in the world. The holy man told him that he was looking for peace within himself, because he could only help others once he was at peace with himself.

Siddhartha quickly returned to the palace and told his wife that he had to leave her and find a way to stop suffering in the world. He then left the walls of his rich, safe home forever. He cut his hair with his sword and exchanged his silk clothes for a patchwork robe of rags. He took the heavy gold earrings out of his ears, and he took off his shoes and walked barefoot.

For six years Siddhartha studied with many teachers to understand how to stop suffering in the world. No one could give him the answer. Finally, he went alone to sit under a tree, vowing he would not get up until he understood why people must suffer so much in life. Mara, the evil one, sent armies to attack him and storms to disturb him, but nothing could stop Siddhartha from trying to answer the question.

Finally, on the forty-ninth day of his meditation, Siddhartha reached down and touched the earth with his right hand to ask the earth to witness his ability to resist Mara's evil forces and to confirm his newly enlightened state. At last he had found the answer: wanting things is the reason why human beings suffer so much. Only when people stop wanting things and instead live a simple life can they be truly happy. At that moment Siddhartha became the Buddha, or "enlightened one."

Lesson 1: Life of the Buddha Quiz Worksheet

Name:______________________________ Date:____________________

1. Which event happened after Siddhartha saw a very old man and before he saw a dead man?
   (a) Siddhartha was born under a tree.
   (b) Siddhartha went out of the palace for the first time.
   (c) Siddhartha was married.
   (d) Siddhartha saw a sick man.

2. From the story we know that Siddhartha:
   (a) had an easy life.
   (b) liked being stuck in the palace.
   (c) was unhappy at the palace.
   (d) wanted to find the cause of suffering.

3. All of these are true except:
   (a) Siddhartha became the Buddha.
   (b) Siddhartha's mother's name was Maya.
   (c) Siddhartha never got married.
   (d) Siddhartha left the palace four times.

4. The reason Siddhartha left the palace was:
   (a) He did not like his father.
   (b) He could get richer if he left.
   (c) He liked the things outside the palace.
   (d) He needed to an answer to an important question.

5. We can tell from the story that Siddhartha's father:
   (a) wanted him to do whatever he wanted to do.
   (b) tried to keep him from becoming a holy man.
   (c) was not a part of his life.
   (d) talked to him a lot about what he wanted to do.

6. If the story continued, it might tell us:
   (a) about the importance of trees.
   (b) who Mara was.
   (c) Siddhartha's problems with food.
   (d) what Siddhartha did as the Buddha.

7. When Siddhartha became a holy man, he did all of the following except:
   (a) cut his hair.
   (b) wear rags instead of a robe.
   (c) take the heavy gold earrings out of his ears.
   (d) eat one last dinner at home.

8. You can tell from the story that a holy man:
   (a) has a family.
   (b) eats well.
   (c) is usually a prince first.
   (d) wants to help other people.

9. The word meditation in the last paragraph most likely means:
   (a) finding answers by thinking hard about something.
   (b) touching the earth with your hand.
   (c) wanting too many things.
   (d) sitting under a tree for a very long time without moving.

10. All of these are true about Siddhartha except:
   (a) an important event in Siddhartha's life took place under a tree.
   (b) Siddhartha's servant explained things to him.
   (c) a teacher answered Siddhartha's question about why people suffer.
   (d) Siddhartha's mother was told something about her son before he was born.

11. Which of the following is an opinion?
   (a) Siddhartha lived in a palace for many years.
   (b) It is better to be a holy man than a prince.
   (c) Siddhartha never got married.
   (d) Siddhartha cut his hair when he became a holy man.

Max

The Golden Buddha

Who was a prince, had a question, and found it's answer? Buddha of course, What! you don't know about Buddha. Well I think you haven't been to the Asia Arts Museam have you? But don't worry I'll tell you about Buddha. Buddha's name was actually Siddhartha. He was a prince who didn't know much about the world because his father the king didn't let him go outside the palace. He was afraid Siddhartha would become a Holy man. If you want more information go to the museam now. If you want details keep reading. The statue of Buddha is golden. The bumpy hair on top of his head is blue. If you look closely you will see a red dot on his forehead. That is a symbol. It represents Buddha's third eye which means he knows almost anything. Now if you look at his ears you'll notice they're long. That is also a symbol. That symbol represents that Buddha gave up his rich stuff. He had heavy gold earings. The earings pulled his ears down that's why his ears are long. I think you're wondering why Buddha's hand is touching the box he's sitting on. Well, Buddha is touching the box because when he had a question he touched the earth just like he is

Max, grade 5

Max

doing in this statue and he got the answer to his question. His question was why the world suffers so much. His answer was that the world suffered because people wanted too many things. The statue of Buddha probably feels like a rock. The reason I'm saying this is because you can't touch things in the museum. If you look at a lotus flower you will notice it can be compared to Buddha because the petals on the bottom look like their legs are folded and Buddha's legs are folded too. Well, it was nice to intertian you. Thank you for reading.



This lesson Includes:

> extension activities
> discussion questions
> comparison chart worksheet and key
> example of student essay

SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA AS THE BUDDHA AND AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

Contributed by Sharon Madison, Langley High School, Virginia

Subjects: World Studies/History/Literature/Art
Grade level: High School

Goals

Students will:

> understand the inherent differences between the visual arts and literature.
> appreciate the use of structure and recurring motifs in carious works of art.
> understand the ubiquitous nature of the message of the Buddha.

Objectives

Students will:

> read *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse.
> examine reproductions of four scenes from the life of the Buddha (pages 20–21).
> compare their observations about these art forms in essay or in journal form or through a fine arts medium.

Background and Motivation

Before reading the novel, students should use the information in this packet to learn about Buddhism. Students can do independent research, or the teacher can cover the subject in class.

Vocabulary

medium: the material with which an artist works.

point of view: the way in which the author or artist presents material; the vantage point (in literature this is most commonly first person or third person — omniscient or limited).

structure: a work's organizational framework.

subject matter: the topic being examined.

symbols: objects or images that stand for something else; also known as archetypes when their meaning is primary or universal.

theme: the underlying meaning of a work or idea.

unifying elements: any devices that provide internal structure and pull a work together (recurring symbols, underlying concepts, etc.).

Materials

The novel *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse and reproductions showing four scenes from the life of the Buddha (pages 20–21).

Activities

1. Students will read the novel *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse
2. Students will examine reproductions of the four scenes from the life of the Buddha (see pages 20–21).
3. Students will complete a comparison chart (see sample on page 72) for the two works.
4. Using the students' comparison charts and the discussion study questions (see pages 69–70), the teacher will lead a discussion about the book and the artwork.
5. Students will respond in writing, or through a fine art medium, to the following:
    > These two works are common in subject, in structural divisions, and in theme, yet they vary greatly in the stories they tell. Please describe these similarities and differences.
    > Which work appeals to you more? Why?
    > Which gives you a clearer understanding of Buddhism? Explain the reasons for your choice.
    > Which has more personal relevance for you?

Lesson Plan 2

Evaluation and Assessment

1. Did the student read the novel?
2. Did the student examine the stone panels?
3. Did the student complete a comparison chart of the two works?
4. Did the student make a personal response to their findings either through a written essay or a fine art medium?

Extension Activities

Fine Art

Hermann Hesse (1877–1962) was an artist as well as a writer, and he illustrated *Siddhartha.* Research the author and find copies of his illustrations for the text.

History and Philosophy

Hesse was interested in Hinduism as well as Buddhism. The subtitle of *Siddhartha* is "An Indic Poetic Work." Read parts of the *Bhagavad Gita* and look for connections to *Siddhartha.* Create your own chart of Hindu, Buddhist, and possible Judeo-Christian elements of the novel.

Psychology

Hesse was deeply involved with Jungian psychology. This form of psychoanalysis, established by Swiss psychologist Carl Jung (1875–1961), relies heavily on dream interpretation, universal symbols (archetypes), and a realization of the unity of antithetical elements in the universe. After researching the basic elements of Jung's beliefs, see how many principles are applicable to *Siddhartha*. What archetypal elements appear in the original stone panel?

Literature

Read the poem "Brahma" by the American transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882). Compare the poem to the two other works of art using your chart. What similarities do you see among these works that were created in different centuries by artists of dissimilar cultures?

Research and Writing

After researching the background of Emerson and Hesse, create a dialogue between them as they "meet" in the Smithsonian to view these stone panels. (The students may also add Jung or themselves to the conversation.)

Lesson Plan 2

Tips for Teachers

Ninth and tenth grade students

These students may find it easier or more appropriate to respond to the two works artistically.

Eleventh and twelfth grade students

The written analysis might be more appropriate for these students. Extend the lesson to include Emerson's poem "Brahma"; broaden the material to include transcendentalism. Include a lesson on Jungian psychology (led either by the students or the teacher), so the students can see the relationship between the collective unconscious and selflessness.

Lesson Materials

Discussion and study questions

Siddhartha by Herman Hesse and four scenes from the life of the Buddha (see page 18)

1. Artists use common elements regardless of the medium. A work of art must have a fundamental structure and an organizing principle. Comparing the panels and *Siddhartha,* indicate the structural pattern or divisions. What is the relationship among the parts? What are the common elements of the two works? *[Both are divided into stages of a journey. That journey has a chronological sequence. The journey is a search for meaning.]*

2. How are the two patterns dissimilar or particular to the story that each artist is telling? *[Answers will vary. The journey of Siddhartha is not the exact life story of Gautama Buddha, which is why the woman, Kamala, the boatman, and Govinda are not represented in the panels. The Buddha is a separate character in Hesse's novel.]*

3. Both writers and artists use symbols to develop a theme or an underlying meaning. Identify the symbols seen in each work, regardless of their meaning. Point out any recurring motifs or symbols.

4. Based upon your lists, which symbols are identical in each work? Which symbols are equivalent? Obviously, using different media places different limitations on the artists. Both Hesse and the unidentified artist wanted to suggest the cyclical nature of the journey. How does each represent the cycle and the infinite nature of the journey? How does each work show impermanence? How does each show temptations, both earthly and spiritual?

5. If you had to pick one symbol that represents the artist's primary message, what would it be? *[Answers may vary, but they should include the wheel, the lotus, the tree, the Buddha himself, the river, the sacred om, the bird, etc.]*

6. What advantages are there in using words to tell the story of Siddhartha? What can Hesse convey that the visual artist cannot? *[He can use more descriptive detail and be more precise in the message that he wants to convey. Dialogue and thoughts are often more specific than a visual representation. The author can introduce sound as a symbol, such as the river and the sacred om. This may be more intellectually satisfying than visual art.]*

7. What advantages are associated with the visual art? What can the Indian artist do that the author cannot? *[The viewer does not need to know a written language to "read" the text. The universality of the symbols underscores the widespread beliefs of the philosophy. The viewer may have a strictly aesthetic response to the panels. This may be more spiritually or aesthetically satisfying than the written description in the novel.]*

Lesson Plan 2: Comparison Chart · Worksheet

Four scenes from the life of the Buddha	Siddhartha
Subject Matter	**Subject matter**
Structure/Divisions	**Structure/Divisions**
Point of View	**Point of View**
Unifying elements	**Unifying elements**
Medium	**Medium**
Symbols	**Symbols**
Theme	**Theme**

Lesson Plan 2: Comparison Chart · Key

Four scenes from the life of the Buddha

Subject Matter
The search for enlightenment, life of the
Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama

Structure/Divisions
Four rectangular panels showing episodes
from the life of Buddha

Point of View
Detached, anonymous artist

Unifying elements
Chronology, the journey

Medium
Stone

Symbols
The animals at Deer Park, wheel, lotus, tree

Theme
Enlightenment

Siddhartha

Subject matter
The search for enlightenment
Life of Siddhartha Guatama

Structure/Divisions
Four chapters on childhood
Eight chapters on experiencing life
(or three divisions of life experiences)

Point of View
Third person, primarily limited to Siddhartha until the end shifts to Govinda

Unifying elements
Chronology, the journey, symbols

Medium
Written language, novel (translated from German)

Symbols
The river, water, voice/om, the bird, structural divisions (Four Noble Truths), Eightfold Path

Theme
Enlightenment

Extra Credit: Comparison of Siddhartha and Panels

Athough the written word and the use of art can both portray the same subject, one of the two mediums usually impacts the student more than the other. In comparing the novella *Siddhartha* and the narrative relief panels, *The Four Great* Miracles, both of which relate the legend of the Buddha, I was affected more by the panels than by *Siddhartha*. Constructed of stone that was placed along the base of a stupa at Gandhara, the panels were more aesthetically appealing, and they were more effective at reinforcing the traditional symbols associated with Buddhism, along with elucidating Buddha's journey from his miraculous birth to Nirvana. I found that the sequence of the relief panels was the more logical of the two mediums for the purpose of portraying Buddha's journey and the Four Nobles Truths and Eightfold Path to Nirvana.

I have always associated Buddhism with iconography and visual imagery; therefore, I think that it is necessary to study visual images and representations of the Buddha's journey when studying the tenets of Buddhism. Some symbols can only be successfully illustrated through the medium of art, and such symbols are depicted in the panels, which reinforce one's understanding of the philosophy of Buddhism. Trees, which represent the center of the universe in Buddhist philosophy, are repeated throughout the panels, suggesting that the tree can represent all things or oneness. In the second panel, "The miracle of the enlightenment," the papal tree alerts the viewer of Buddha's enlightenment. The visual image of Buddha conquering the forces of Mara by putting his hand to the ground also alerts the viewer that Buddha is achieving enlightenment. Another Buddhist symbol, the snake, is also depicted in the panels, reinforcing the symbol of *naga*. Often used in Buddhist iconography, *naga* protects Buddha as he is meditating. Rather than merely reading that a cobra protects Buddha in *Siddhartha*, it was more advantageous seeing the image in the panels of the cobra above the Buddha, producing a halo effect. The cobra alerted me that Buddha had been enlightened, due to the positive image of the halo. Furthermore, in the third panel, "The miracle of the first sermon," I saw the image of the wheel, which represents Buddha setting the wheel in motion by informing his disciples of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. The wheel is a visual element that also stimulated me of Buddha's journey to enlightenment. Reading about these basic symbols, which I thought were described minimally and without distinguishing elements, did not produce the desired effect that seeing them in art does. *Siddhartha* was limited in its depiction of Buddhist icons and symbols, which were not described in great detail and were consequently not imprinted in my mind.

—Lizzie W., 11 December 2000, AP English, Period 6

Lesson Plan 2

Extension Activities for Lower Grades

Contributed by Victoria Walchak, Barnard Elementary School, Washington, D.C.

Elementary School

Read or have the students read an account of the life of the Buddha. After they have heard or read the story, divide the class into small groups and hand out copies of the four panels of scenes from the life of the Buddha. Have each group put their images into the proper sequence. Ask one group of students to share their results and explain why they arranged the panels in a particular order. Have the rest of the class discuss the results.

Middle School

Examine the four scenes from the life of the Buddha (pages 20–21).
Ask the students to identify and describe what they see, using the following questions.

- What material is used in this work?
- How many panels does it contain?
- Who and what are depicted in them?
- What are the people doing?
- What are their facial expressions?

Then have the students analyze the work.

- Is it easy or difficult to carve stone?
- Do you think it is an old or modern work? Why?
- What makes the action in the second panel more violent than that in the third panel?
- How is the figure of the Buddha made to stand out in each section?

After the students analyze the work, have them interpret it using the following questions.

- What do you think the artist chose to depict in these four scenes?
- If you were in ________________ (pick a scene), what would you see, hear, smell, or feel?
- Why did the artist use stone?

Finally, ask the students to judge the work using the following questions.

- Do you think the piece does a good job at telling the tale of the Buddha? Why or why not?
- Do you like it? Why or why not?

Close the activity by summarizing the information and insights put forth by the students.

BUDDHIST SYMBOLS IN ART

Contributed by Victoria Walchak, Barnard Elementary School, Washington, D.C., and Anne Garbarino, Hutchinson Elementary School, Virginia

Subjects: Art/Language Arts/Social Studies
Grade level: Elementary/Middle School
Time needed: Five 45-minute periods

Goal

To learn about the symbols of Buddhism and to make an artwork using the symbols.

Objectives

> Students will identify symbols used in their everyday lives and will consider their function in society (e.g., McDonald's golden arches and a peace sign).
> Students will listen to or read a story about the Buddha's life and learn about symbols that identify an image of the Buddha or represent aspects of his life and teachings.
> Students will examine works of art (see pages 20–21, 23, and 33) to find Buddhist symbols.
> Students will compare and contrast the Buddha and the bodhisattvas in the Buddhist trinity (page 33).
> Students will produce artworks using symbols and the distinguishing characteristics of the Buddha or a bodhisattva.

Vocabulary

bodhisattva: an enlightened being who chooses not to proceed to nirvana but instead remains on earth to guide others on their path to enlightenment.

Buddha: the "enlightened one"; commonly applied to the historical figure Siddhartha Gautama (ca. 563-ca. 483 B.C.E.)

Eightfold Path: the basic moral teaching of Buddhism.

enlightenment: the highest level of consciousness, believed to be attainable through meditation and an adherence to the principles of the Eightfold Path.

Four Noble Truths: outlines Buddhist philosophy on suffering and how to overcome it.

lotus flower: a beautiful flower that rises from muddy water to blossom above the water's surface. According to the Buddha, like the lotus, people can rise above their desire for material things to overcome suffering and to live an enlightened life (see page 30).

nirvana: a spiritual state of perfect peace beyond selfish attachments; reaching nirvana frees the soul from the endless cycle of birth and rebirth.

portrait: a depiction of a specific person

relief sculpture: a figure or design that stands out from a flat background.

reincarnation: the belief that human souls proceed through multiple lives until they attain enlightenment and reach nirvana.

renunciate: to give up something.

stupa: a domed structure containing relics of the Buddha; a site of worship and pilgrimage.

sutra: Buddhist holy writing or text.

symbol: a sign, drawing, or word that represents an idea or an act.

ushnisha: a bump on the top of the Buddha's head that symbolizes his superior knowledge.

urna: a dot on the Buddha's forehead that indicates his special wisdom.

wheel of dharma: a symbol of the Buddha's teachings that was set in motion on the day the Buddha gave his first sermon (see page 11).

Materials

Symbols from everyday life (Stop and No Smoking signs, McDonald's golden arches, Nike swoosh, etc.), reproductions of works from the Freer and Sackler galleries, a text recounting the story of the Buddha's life (see book list on page 88), handouts on Buddhist symbols; pencils, pens, paper, clay, carving tools, and paint.

Motivation

1. Display symbols the students will immediately recognize, such as McDonald's golden arches or a stop sign. Discuss the significance and associations attached to these signs. Why are these symbols used? When are they useful? When aren't they useful?

2. Read a story about the Buddha's life or have the students read one quietly in class or as a homework assignment (see the story of the Buddha on page 60.)
3. Examine images of the Buddha found in this packet (see objects on pages 20–21, 23, and 33). Ask the students to identify the features that are common to most or all of the images (long earlobes, urna, unshnisha, mudras, facial expression, costume, etc.). Discuss the meanings of these features and how they act as symbols in Buddhist imagery.
4. Examine the Buddhist altarpiece (see page 33). Compare and contrast the central figure with those on either side of it. Consider gesture, facial expression, and costume. Have the students determine which figure is the Buddha and which are bodhisattvas by identifying the distinguishing features of each.

Activity

1. Hand out a reference sheet on Buddhist symbols, and ask the students to draw a portrait of the Buddha or a bodhisattva framed by a pattern of Buddhist symbols, such as mudras, a lotus, or a stupa. Enhance this activity by using metallic pens on dark paper to make the drawings reminiscent of ancient Buddhist texts known as sutras. (To emphasize the preciousness of Buddha's teachings, some monks ground precious minerals into their inks to transcribe these sacred texts.)
2. Use the drawings from the above activity to guide the students as they create clay-relief portraits of the Buddha. Demonstrate various ways to carve, mold, and stamp the clay. Have the students include distinguishing marks of the Buddha and other Buddhist symbols in their clay relief. After the sculptures have hardened, apply black acrylic paint with a brush as a base coat (be sure to fill in all the crevices) and allow it to dry. Then, apply several thin layers of gold acrylic paint with a sponge. Do not fill in the recessed parts of the sculpture so the black paint, in those areas, will add definition to the detail.
3. Have the students view and discuss the works in terms of their formal qualities and what they have learned about Buddhist art. Some discussion questions might include:
   - Which artworks represent the Buddha and which represent bodhisattvas? Explain the similarities and differences.
   - Do all representations of the same person have to look alike?
   - What accounts for the differences in individual responses to the same subject?
   - If you could do your own work over, what would you change? Why?

Lesson Plan 3

Assessment

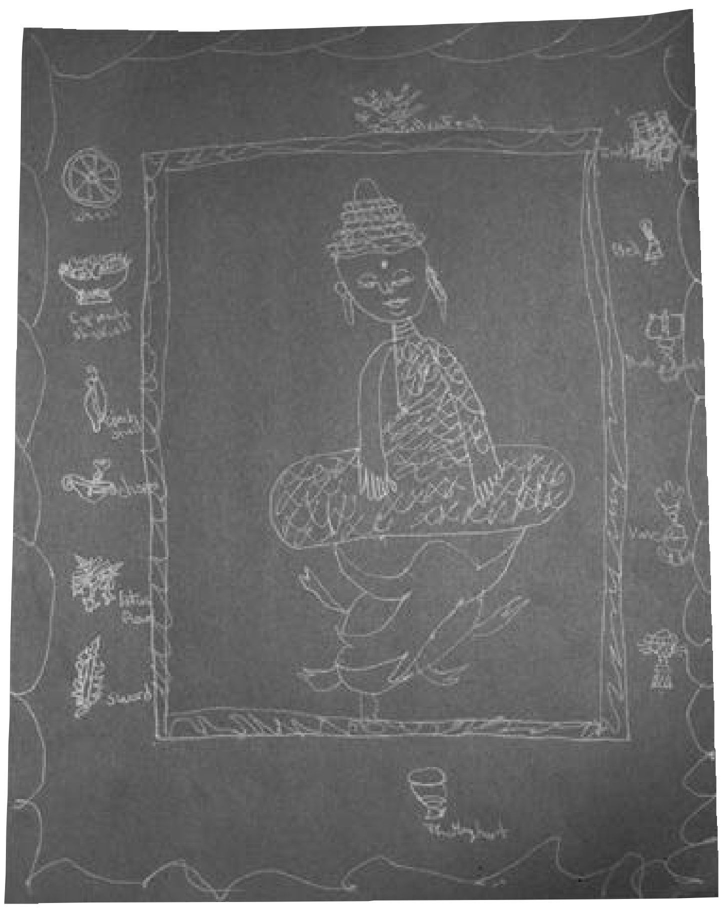
1. Is the student able to identify symbols from our everyday life and understand their function?
2. Can the student identify the Buddha and Buddhist symbols in artworks?
3. Can the student distinguish between the Buddha and a bodhisattva?
4. Does the student recognize formal and expressive use of symbols in works of art?
5. Has the student created a relief portrait of the Buddha or a bodhisattva that displays knowledge of their distinguishing features?

Extension

Have the students create self-portraits, which include symbols representing personality traits and things or people important to them (e.g., a lightning bolt to show energy, a setting sun to show tranquility, the initials of someone special, or a paint brush or palette to show creativity).

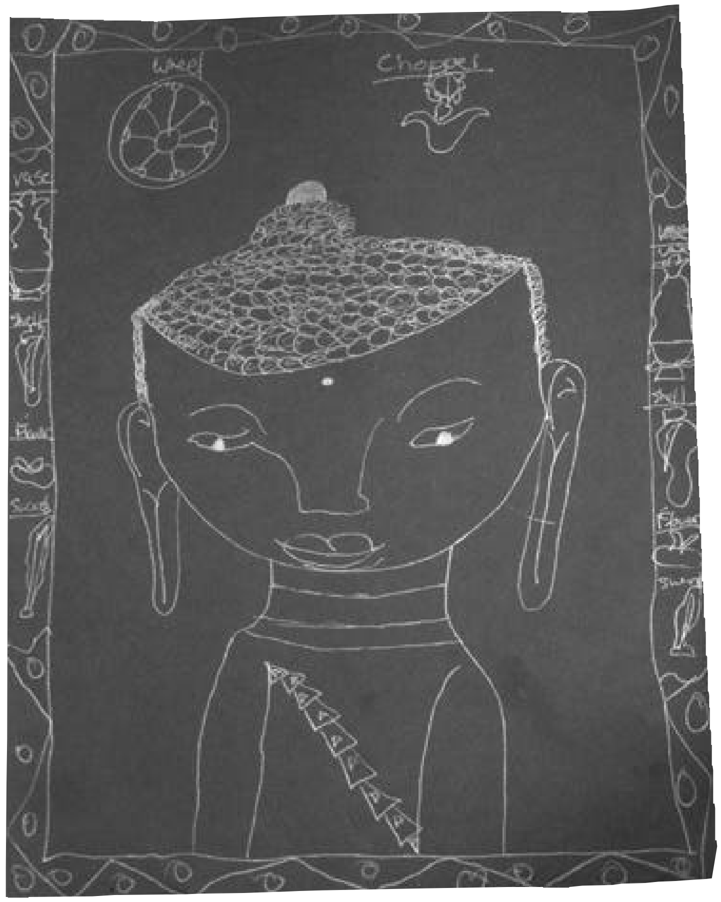
Laquanda, grade 4





Laquanda, grade 4

Lesson 3: Example of Student Work



Kaleah, grade 4



Kaleah, grade 4

TEMPLE GUARDIANS AND OTHER HEROES WE TRUST

Contributed by Jacqueline Graces, Brightwood Elementary School, Washington, D.C., and Viola Leak, Meyer Elementary School, Washington, D.C.

Subjects: Art/Social Studies
Grade level: Elementary School
Time needed: Three 40-minute class periods

Goal

Students will compare and contrast heroic figures of today with thirteenth-century Japanese temple guardian figures and make an artwork related to this theme.

Objectives

> Students will examine thirteenth-century Japanese temple guardian figures (page 41).
> Students will identify and discuss how gesture and expression convey meaning in an artwork.
> Students will identify and discuss special (sacred) places and spaces in their lives and then determine the qualities of one who may protect those areas.
> Students will compare the Japanese temple guardian figures with contemporary heroes.

Vocabulary

adjective: a word describing a person, place, or thing.

compare: to show similarities among people, things, or ideas.

contrast: to set people, things, or ideas in opposition in order to emphasize differences.

dynamic: of or relating to physical force or energy.

expression: the act of conveying thoughts or feelings through words or actions.

gesture: a movement of the hands, head, or other part of the body that shows what a person is thinking or feeling.

Lesson Plan 4

hero/heroic: a person who others look up to because of his or her great achievements or fine qualities.

sacred: deserving to be treated with great respect.

Materials

Large construction or drawing paper, magazines, newspapers, comic books, pencils, compasses, scissors, glue, markers, pastels, paint, etc.

Motivation and Discussion

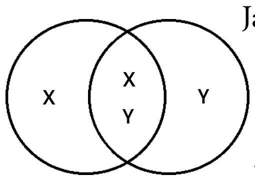
> Present images of and information about Japanese temple guardian figures found in this teacher's guide.

> As a group, create a list of adjectives that best describe the guardian figures. (If you do not see the guardian figures at the museum, tell the students about the size of the actual figures.) As adjectives are listed,have the students explain their use by referring to something they see in the figures, such as a "scary." What is scary about the figure? (The face) What about the face looks scary? (Its mouth is snarling and its eyebrows are furrowed.)

> Discuss the original function of the figures as guardians of a sacred space, then make a list of special places in our lives, such as schools, churches, sporting arenas, libraries, etc.

Activity

1. Have the students gather pictures of figures that they think would be good guardians for their sacred building. The figures should serve to protect their ideas and values. These pictures can come from magazines or newspapers, or students can bring in a photograph of someone they would trust in this role.
2. Instruct each student to include one of their collected figures and a photocopy of a Japanese temple guardian in a Venn diagram. Around each image in the Venn diagram, students should place adjectives that are distinct to each figure. In the center they should list the qualities that the figures have in common.
3. After the basic diagram is completed and the figures and words are in place, have the students use shape, line, color, and drawings to emphasize the dynamic qualities of the figures.
4. To complete the lesson, instruct the students to draw their guardian figure on a large piece of paper. The figure should guard the student's special or sacred place.



Venn Diagram

Assessment

Did the student:

1. Participate in the discussion about the guardian figures and sacred spaces?
2. Find or create an image of a figure that could serve as a guardian for a special place?
3. Complete a Venn diagram that compares a heroic figure with a Japanese temple guardian figure?
4. Use art to enhance and emphasize the dynamic qualities of the figures in the Venn diagram?
5. Make a drawing of an imaginary guardian figure in front of a special or sacred place?

This project fulfills District of Columbia Fine Arts Standards 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 and Social Studies Standard 6.

Extensions

Math

Exploring scale

Have the students draw a grid of one-inch squares over a copy of a guardian figure. The squares on the grid will represent one foot of the actual height of the figure. On a much larger piece of paper — use a roll of brown butcher paper — have the students make a grid of one-foot squares. Then, using their grid-covered copy of the guardian figures, have them transfer that image to the grid on the butcher paper. Do this by drawing into each large grid square an approximation of what is found in the corresponding square of the small grid that covers the copied image of the guardian.

Language Arts

Writing haiku

Using the list of adjectives gathered during the class discussion, have the students write a haiku poem about the temple guardian figures or the figure they created to guard their special place. Or have them write a haiku about their special place (see haiku, page 38).

Lesson 4: Example of Student Work



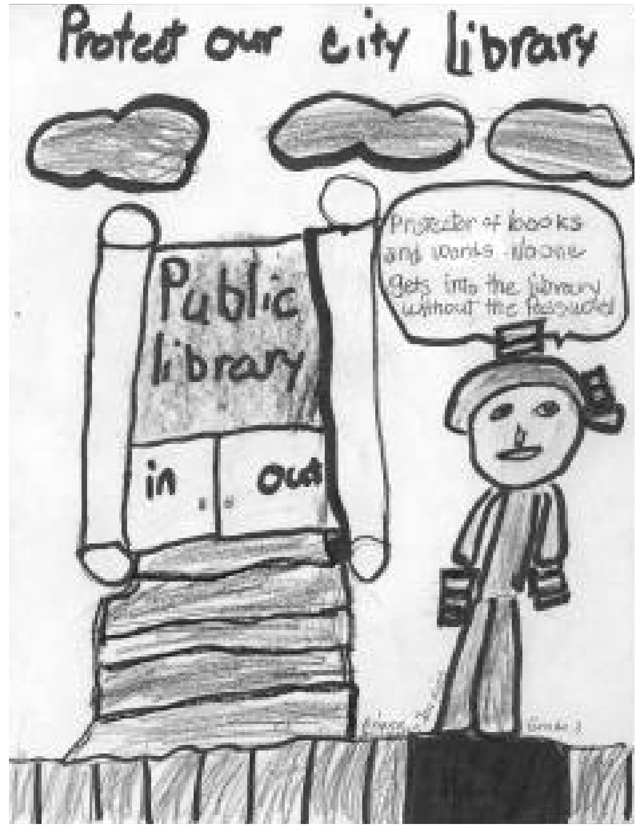
Lehr, grade 4



Donald, grade 6



Molly, grade 3



Briana, grade 3



Christopher, grade 5

Buddhist Festivals

Autumn

In China and Taiwan, the festival of the Hungry Ghosts is celebrated in October. Hungry ghosts are spiteful, restless spirits who can only be appeased with offerings. According to one legend, the Buddha told his followers how to placate these hungry ghosts. Buddhists make offerings of food and burn "spirit money," paper clothing, and other paper objects to send them to hungry ghosts in the spirit world.

> Visit a local Chinese market for samples of spirit money and paper objects for classroom display.
> Cook traditional Chinese dishes and sweets. (Traditionally, a portion of this food would be reserved and offered to the hungry ghosts. In the classroom, your students will enjoy the special tastes!)
> Make a presentation to the students about the history and meaning of our Halloween traditions. In a class discussion, compare and contrast American Halloween with the Festival of the Hungry Ghosts.
> Have high school students research the origins of American Halloween and write an essay comparing and contrasting their findings with what they have learned about the Festival of the Hungry Ghosts.

Winter

On December 8, Buddhists worldwide celebrate Bodhi Day. This holiday commemorates the day on which Siddhartha attained enlightenment under a bodhi tree. Every year, many Buddhists make a pilgrimage to this specific tree, which is located in Bodhgaya, India. This day is also observed in Japan with meditation at Zen temples.

> Read to the class or have the students read a story or passage about the Buddha's enlightenment. Discuss the challenges the Buddha faced from Mara and how he chose to respond.
> Have a classroom discussion about meditation (what it is, how it helped the Buddha, who does it, and why).
> On a world map, have students find the location of Bodhgaya, India, then have them identify the location of your state, city, or town in relation to Bodhgaya.

> Find an image of a bodhi tree for classroom display. Have the students research other trees under which they would like to sit quietly for several hours. Instruct them to make a drawing or painting of their tree and write a short passage about why it would be nice to sit beneath it.

Spring

The festival of Vesak is celebrated in May worldwide. This spring festival is held in remembrance of the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death. During this celebration, Buddhists clean and decorate their homes, attend performances, worship at their local temples, give food and drink to strangers, and participate in religious processions.

> Have a classroom discussion about who or what needs help in your community. As a class decide which individual, group, or place you would like to help and what you would like to do. Then do it!

The Japanese festival of Hana Matsuri, which also takes place in the spring (April 8), celebrates the birth of the Buddha. Buddhists and Buddhist priests participate in the *Kanbutsu-e* ceremony by cleansing statues of the baby Buddha with a special hydrangea tea and covering the figures with flowers.

> Ask the students to identify and research one person who they think has helped the world in important ways. Have each student make a clay bust of the person or a sculpture of some object that represents him/her. After the clay sculptures are dry, have the students paint them.

Books and Magazines on Buddhism

Books for Young Readers

Demi. *Buddha*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996.

This beautifully illustrated book outlines the major events in Siddhartha's life, from his birth to his enlightenment.

Demi. B*uddha Stories.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997.

Lovely gold-on-blue line drawings illustrate this elegant book that relates a few jataka tales. These didactic parables, based on the past lives of the Buddha, often use animals as main characters.

Demi. *The Dalai Lama: A Biography of the Tibetan Spiritual and Political Leader*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998.

This book, which chronicles the life of the current Dalai Lama, introduces readers to the present-day situation of Tibet and its refugees.

Gollub, Matthew. *Cool Melons — Turn to Frogs! The Life and Poems of Issa*. New York: Lee and Low Books, 1998.

This book tells the story of Issa, who writes haiku about everyday things and events.

Hewitt, Catherine. *Buddhism*. New York: Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1995.

Sidebars, maps, and diagrams complement color photographs and important information on Buddhism in this book.

Lee, J. M. *I Once Was a Monkey: Stories Buddha Told.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1999.

Five unlikely companions — a monkey, a lion, a jackal, a turtle, and a dove — wait out a monsoon in a cave. There, a small statue of the Buddha comes to life and calms the quarreling animals by telling them stories from his past lives. This gentle tale explains some of the basic teachings of Buddhism.

Raimondo, Lois. *The Little Lama of Tibet*. New York: Scholastic, 1994.

What is it like to be six years old and a high lama? The author spent a year in Dharmasala, where many Tibetan refugees in India live. He photographed and interviewed young Ling Rinpoche, the boy considered to be the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama's late teacher.

Roth, Susan L. *Buddha*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
This book tells the story of Siddhartha, from his birth to his enlightenment when he became the Buddha. The illustrations are cut from paper, and the story line of this introduction to the Buddha and Buddhism is clear and interesting for elementary age students.

Sis, Peter. *Tibet: Through the Red Box.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998.
In this unusually imaginative and richly illustrated book, the author weaves a quixotic tale culled from the diaries of his father's sojourn to China and Tibet in the 1950s as a "voluntary" member of a Communist-sponsored film crew.

Snelling, John. *Buddhism.* New York: Franklin Watt, 1986.
Pictures of monks, temples, and the Asian countryside place Buddhism in the context of the world today.

Spivak, Dawnine. *Grass Sandals: The Travels of Basho.* New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1997.
This is a story about Basho, one of the most beloved poets in Japan, and his journeys.

Magazines for Young Readers

"Ashoka: India's Philosopher King." *Calliope, A Cobblestone Publication* 10, no. 5 (January 2000).
This issue of *Calliope* features the history and legacy of Ashoka, the Indian ruler whose conversion to Buddhism in the third century B.C.E. firmly established that religion's presence on the Indian subcontinent. Ashoka's edicts on nonviolence influenced the thinking of Mohandas Gandhi (1869–1948), Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968), and Nelson Mandela (born 1918).

"Buddhism." *Calliope* 5, no. 4 (March-April 1995).
This issue devoted to Buddhism offers articles on the history and art of Buddhism and its modern-day practice. It includes lists for further reading, places to visit, and teacher resources.

Books for Adults

de Bary, William Theodore. *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China and Japan.* New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

This extensive collection of excerpts from Buddhist texts focuses on writings important to the evolution of Buddhist thought and practice.

Fisher, Robert E. *Buddhist Art and Architecture.* New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993.

Buddhist art and architecture, from its earliest forms in India to the various Asian countries where Buddhism is now practiced, is the subject of this overview. It is most appropriate for readers with a basic knowledge of Buddhism.

Martin, Rafe. *The Hungry Tigress: Buddhist Myths, Legends and Jataka Tales*. Cambridge: Yellow Moon Press, 1999.

Bringing together an array of stories from the Buddhist tradition, this book combines themes of wisdom, nonviolence, environmental awareness, and compassion for all living things.

Nhat Hanh, Thich. *Old Path, White Clouds.* Berkeley, Cal.: Parallax Press, 1991.

This book, written by Nobel Peace Prize nominee and Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh, presents the life and teachings of Guatama Buddha and is drawn directly from twenty-four Pali, Sanskrit, and Chinese sources.

Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught.* New York: Grove Press, 1986.

Rahula, a monk and scholar, explains the main points of Buddhism and translates key scriptures.

Wright, Arthur F. *Buddhism in Chinese History.* Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1994.

This concise but thorough account of Buddhism in China explores the cultural and philosophical milieu at the time of Buddhism's transmission as well as the way Buddhism evolved in China.

Films and Videos about Buddhism

The following films were selected from catalogues of producers, distributors, and lending institutions in the United States. The staff of the Freer and Sackler galleries has not reviewed each of thesefilms. Thoseseen by ourstaff are marked "for teacher reference" or "for students." Information on renting or purchasing these films and videos follows the list.

General

Hinduism and Buddhism
Bill Moyers and Huston Smith explore these two religions, including the multiphonic chanting of Tibetan lamas and a discussion of Zen Buddhism. Video, 56 minutes; available for rent or purchase. Films for the Humanities and Sciences (for students).

Walking with Buddha
Filmed in Thailand, this introduction to the life of the Buddha and the development of Buddhism in various countries includes a description of the daily life of Buddhist priests. Video, 29 minutes; available for rent or purchase. Films for the Humanities and Sciences.

Buddha on the Silk Road
Retrace the seventh-century travels of the Chinese Buddhist monk Xuan Zang as he journeys from China to India in search of the Buddha's original teachings. Video, 60 minutes; available for purchase. Mystic Fire Videos (for students).

Tibet

Requiem for a Faith
This classic, early film by Huston Smith documents the efforts of exiled Tibetans living in a refugee camp in India to preserve the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism. 1972. Video, 28 minutes; free rental. UVA Center for South Asian Studies.

The Lama King
This BBC production provides rare scenes of the Dalai Lama's flight from Tibet. It also includes coverage of the life of Tibetan refugees in northern India. 1976. Film, 45 minutes; free rental. UVA Center for South Asian Studies (for students).

Tsundu: Becoming a Lama
Follow the story of a thirteen-year-old Tibetan boy as he studies to become a monk. 1997. Video, 17 minutes; available for rent or purchase (discounts for K-12 teachers). Documentary Educational Resources (for students).

The Dalai Lama: A Portrait in the First Person
The spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism discusses anger, anxiety, tolerance, compassion, and enlightenment. Video, 24 minutes; available for purchase. Film for the Humanities and Sciences (for teacher reference).

Mystic Vision, Sacred Art: The Tradition of Thangka Painting
This introduction to the art of thangka, or sacred Tibetan Buddhist painting, was filmed in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. 1996. Video, 28 minutes; available for rent or purchase. Documentary Educational Resources.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead
These Tibetan Buddhist texts traditionally are read aloud to a dying person. 1994. 90 minutes (two 45-minute videos). Free rental. UVA Center for South Asian Studies.
Part I: "A Way of Life" provides an historical and cultural overview of the rituals that are performed for a recently deceased elder and examines the text's use in hospices in Europe and North America. It includes an interview with the Dalai Lama concerning the book's meaning and importance.
Part II: "The Great Liberation" takes a close look at the content and teachings of the book.

Sand Painting: Sacred Art of Tibetan Buddhism
Two Tibetan monks painstakingly create a mandala (sacred sand painting) at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. 1991. Video, 30 minutes; free rental. UVA Center for South Asian Studies (for teacher reference).

Cycles of Interdependence
In Ladakh, Buddhist monks and lay families enjoy a symbiotic relationship, as seen in the annual cycles of growing crops and holding festival dances in tribute to protector deities. 1983. Film or video, 55 minutes; free rental. UVA Center for South Asian Studies.

Entering the Millennium Falling or Flying
Scholar Robert Thurman discusses the application of Tibetan spirituality to social and political activism. Video, 2 hours; available for purchase. Mystic Fire Videos.

The Four Noble Truths
The insightful lectures on Buddhism that the Dalai Lama presented in London in 1996 form the basis of this presentation. Video, 6 hours; available for purchase. Mystic Fire Video.

In the Spirit of Manjushri
Scholar Robert Thurman narrates these lectures given by the Dalai Lama on "Wisdom Teachings." A public discussion between the Dalai Lama and Master Sheng-yen of the Chan (Chinese Zen) lineage follows. Video, 4 hours; available for purchase. Mystic Fire Videos.

Human Rights and Moral Practice
In this video, the Dalai Lama addresses such contemporary themes as birth control, arms trade, and the global economy. Video, 35 minutes; available for purchase. Mystic Fire Videos.

Arising from Flames
The Dalai Lama gave this lecture on overcoming anger through patience while he was in Arizona. Video, 55 minutes; available for purchase. Mystic Fire Videos.

Nepal

Nepal: Land of the Gods
The mingling of Buddhist and pre-Buddhist customs in the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal are documented. 1985. Video, 62 minutes; free rental. UVA Center for South Asian Studies.

Lord of the Dance: Destroyer of Illusion
This Mani Rimdu tantric initiation was performed at Chiwong Monastery in the Mount Everest region of Nepal. 1985. Video, 108 minutes; free rental. UVA Center for South Asian Studies.

China

Buddhism in China
This video surveys the rise of Chinese Buddhism as it traces the spread of Mahayana Buddhism from India to China, the emergence of different schools of thought, and the introduction of Lamaism from Tibet into China. 1983. Film or video, 30 minutes; available for rent or purchase. Indiana University Audio-Visual Center (for teacher reference).

Buddha on the Silk Road
Retrace the seventh-century travels of the Chinese Buddhist monk Xuan Zang as he journeys from China to India in search of the Buddha's original teachings. Video, 60 minutes; available for purchase. Mystic Fire Videos (for students).

Thailand

I am a Monk
Learn about the daily life and education of a Buddhist monk in Thailand, as experienced by an American who lived in a Bangkok monastery for eight years. Video, 30 minutes; free rental. UVA Center for South Asian Studies.

Buddhism: Making of a Monk
A young man in Thailand shares his decision to become a monk and his daily life at the monastery. The initiation ritual of becoming a monk is also described. Video, 15 minutes; available for rent or purchase. Films for the Humanities and Sciences (for students).

Vietnam
Each of these films focuses on Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk and a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967.

Peace is Every Step
Actor Ben Kingsley narrates this documentary on the life and work of Thich Nhat Hanh, including his antiwar activities in Vietnam. Video, 52 minutes; available for purchase. Mystic Fire Videos.

Touching Peace: An Evening with Thich Nhat Hanh
This video records a lecture given by Thich Nhat Hanh in Berkeley, California. Video, 90 minutes; available for purchase. Mystic Fire Video.

Door of Compassion
This video features an interview with Thich Nhat Hanh. Video, 42 minutes; available for purchase. Mystic Fire Videos.

Japan

Buddhism in the Land of the Kami (7th to 12th centuries)
The arrival of Buddhism and its assimilation into native Japanese religion and culture are discussed along with the influence of Chinese culture in Japan. 1996. Video, 53 minutes; available for rent or purchase. Films for the Humanities and Sciences.

The Principles and Practice of Zen
Follow a student priest's travels across Japan as he engages in verbal contests with priests of different schools. The time-honored traditions of the tea ceremony and flower arranging are introduced. Video, 2 hours; available for rent or purchase. Films for the Humanities and Sciences.

Buddhism in the West

Blue Collar and Buddha
When a community of Laotian refugees settles in a small town in Illinois, tensions with the local townspeople rise and come to a head after a Buddhist temple is constructed. 1990. Video, 57 minutes; available for rent or purchase. Filmmakers Library.

Entering the Millennium Falling or Flying
Scholar Robert Thurman investigates the application of Tibetan spiritual practice into social and political activism through kindness and compassion. Video, 2 hours; available for purchase. Mystic Fire Videos (for teacher reference).

From Fragmentation to Wholeness
The Dalai Lama discusses with artist Robert Rauschenberg and David Bohm the need to move from a competitive to a compassionate society. Video, 52 minutes; available for purchase. Mystic Fire Videos (for teacher reference).

Contact Information for Films and Videos

Documentary Educational Resources
101 Morse St.
Watertown, MA 02172
Tel: (617) 926-0491 or (800) 569-6621
Fax: (617) 926-9519
www.der.org

Filmmakers Library
124 East 40th St.
New York, NY 10016
Tel: (212) 808-4980
Fax: (212) 808-4983

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P.O. Box 2053
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Tel: (609) 275-1400 or (800) 257-5126
Fax: (609) 275-3767
E-mail: custserv@films.com
www.films.com

Indiana University Audio-Visual Center
Bloomington, Indiana 47405
Tel: (812) 855-2103
(rentals only)

Mystic Fire Videos
P.O. Box 442
New York, NY 10012-0008
Tel: (800) 999-1319
www.mysticfire.com

University of Virginia Center for South Asian Studies
Film and Video Lending LibraryCenter for South Asian Studies
University of Virginia
110 Minor Hall
Charlottesville, VA 22903
Tel: (804) 924-8815
E-mail: southasia@virginia.edu
www.virginia.edu/~soasia/

Films and videocassettes in the lending library are available free of charge to educators in the southeastern United States. Centers for South Asian Studies serving other regions of the United States are located at Columbia University, the University of Chicago, Cornell University, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Michigan, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Washington at Seattle.

Websites on Buddhism

www.fwbo.org/buddhism.html
For the history of Buddhism, meditation, and Buddhist festivals.

www.pbs.org/edens/thailand/
PBS site about Thailand, Buddhism, and its indigenous animals.

www.tibetart.org/welcome.cfm
For art from Tibet and Nepal; also covers Tibetan Buddhism and its art.

www.buddhanet.net
For a kids' page, magazine articles, photographs, and games about Buddhism.

www.tricycle.com/
Based on the Buddhist magazine *Tricycle;* features articles on current Buddhist events.

www.buddhism.about.com
Offers permanent information on many aspects of Buddhism, although site changes frequently.

www.usmta.com/Buddhist-Temples-USA.htm
Listings of Buddhist temples in all fifty states.

www.mysticfire.com
Source for spiritual, alternative, and art videos and audios.

www.Virginia.edu/~soasia/
Teaching resources for Asian art, information about its video lending library, and internet links; hosted by the University of Virginia.

www.seattleartmuseum.org/trc
Online lesson plans, activities, and web links for a variety of art topics, including Indian and Southeast Asian art.

www.asianart.org
Acquire hands-on teaching kits and videos through the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco.

www.AskAsia.org
Lesson plans and readings for teachers, as well as games, puzzles, and lessons in counting in Chinese for students.

www.Virginia.edu/~soasia/
Provides K-12 teachers with accredited short courses on South Asia through the Center for South Asian Studies.

www.smith.edu/fcceas
Loans curriculum materials, books, kits, video and sound recordings, slides, maps, posters, games, and software on China, Korea, and Japan, to teachers in New England.

www.ias.berkeley.edu/orias/
ORIAS conducts teacher institutes for educators in the Bay Area and provides online lesson plans.

www.Asnic.utexas.edu/asnic/outreach/layout.html
Loans materials to educators anywhere in the United States; provides support services to educators and community members, and lists Asia-centered seminars and workshops.

Local and National Buddhist Temples and Education Centers

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Burma American Buddhist Association
Tel: (301)439-4035

Cambodian

The Cambodian Buddhist Society
Tel: (301) 622-6544
www.cambodian-buddhist.org

Chinese

The United States Zen Institute of Washington, D.C.
Chinese Buddhist Center
Tel: (301) 353-9780 (Chinese)
Tel: (703) 365-9023 (English)

Japanese

American Zen College
Tel: (301) 428-0665

Ekoji Buddhist Temple
Tel: (703) 239-0500
www.ekoji.org
Jodo Shinshu Buddhism

Myosenji Temple (Ashuzan Myosenji Temple)
Tel: (301) 593-9397
Fax: (301) 593-6932
E-mail: **info@nstmyosenji.org**
www.nstmyosenji.org
Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism

Zen Buddhist Center of Washington, D.C.
Tel: (202) 829-1966

Korean

Han Ma Um Korean Zen Center
Tel: (703) 560-5166 (Korean)
Tel: (301) 294-3109 (English)
E-mail: bgmuhn@yahoo.com

Laotian

Wat Lao Buddhavhong (Laotian Buddhist Center)
Tel: (540) 788-4968/9201
Fax: (540) 788-1219
www.watlao.org

Sri Lanka

Buddhist Vihara Society, Inc.
Washington Buddhist Vihara
Tel: (202) 723-0773
Fax: (202) 723-3850
www.buddhistvihara.com

Local Buddhist religious and educational center. Resident monks (Bikkhus) are available to give lectures and workshops. Also contains a Buddhist library.

International Buddhist Center
Tel: (301) 946-9437

Thai

Wat Pah Santhidhama
Tel: (757) 238-3461
E-mail: watpa@iirt.net
www.watpa.iirt.net

Wat Thai of the Washington, D.C., Area
Tel: (301) 871-6721
E-mail: watthai@j uno.com
www.watthaidc.com

Wat Tummaprateip
Tel: (301) 203-9500
Fax: (301) 203-9400
E-mail: dhamma@iirt.com

Wat Yarnna Rangsee Buddhist Monastery
Tel: (703) 406-8290/2509
Fax: (703) 406-4705
www.watyarn.com

For information on Thai temples in other states, please contact:
The Council of Thai Bhikkus in the U.S.A., Inc.
Tel: (914) 699-5778
Fax: (914) 471-8006

Tibetan

Sakya Phunstok Ling Tibetan Buddhist Center
Tel: (301) 589-3115
E-mail: sak ya@erols.com
www.erols.com/sakya/

Shambhala Meditation Center of Washington, D.C.
Tel: (301) 588-7020
E-mail: slh@aol.c om
www.dc.shambhala.org

Vietnamese

Chua Giac Hoang
Tel: (202) 829-2423

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For information on Vietnamese Buddhist temples in other states, please contact:
www.chuavietnam.com

Embassies and Consulates

Cambodia

The Royal Cambodian Embassy
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Fax: (202) 726-8381
E-mail: camb odia@embassy.org
www.embassy.org/cambodia/

China

Embassy of the People's Republic of China
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Washington, DC 20008
Tel: (202) 328-2500
Fax: (202) 588-0032
www.china-embassy.org

India

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2107 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20008
Tel: (202) 939-7000
Fax: (202) 265-4351
www.indianembassy.org

Japan

U.S. Consulate General of Japan
2520 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20008
Tel: (202) 238-6700
Fax: (202) 328-2187
www.embjapan.org

For educational information, please contact:
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Japan Embassy
Lafayette Centre 111
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Washington, DC 20036
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Fax: (202) 822-6524

Laos

Lao PDR Embassy to the USA
2222 S St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20008
Tel: (202) 332-6416
Fax: (202) 332-4923
www.laoembassy.com

Nepal

Royal Nepalese Embassy
2131 Leroy Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20008
Tel: (202) 667-4550/4551
Fax: (202) 667-5534
E-mail: ne pali@erols.com
www.newweb.net/nepal_embassy/

Sri Lanka

Embassy of Sri Lanka
2148 Wyoming Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20008
Tel: (202) 483-4025/4028
Fax: (202) 232-7181
E-mail: Slembassy@starpower.net
Users.erols.com/slembassy

Thailand

Royal Thai Embassy
1024 Wisconsin Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20007
Tel: (202) 944-3600
Fax: (202) 944-3611
E-mail: thai.wsn@thaiembdc.org
www.thaiembdc.org

Vietnam

Embassy of Vietnam
1233 20th St., N.W., Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: (202) 861-0737
Fax: (202) 861-0917
E-mail: info@vietnamembassy-usa.org
www.vietnamembassy-usa.org

National Educational Resources

Ann P. Wyckoff Teacher Resource Center
Seattle Asian Art Museum
1400 East Prospect Street in Volunteer Park

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 22000
Seattle, WA 98122-9700
Tel: (206) 654-3186
www.seattleartmuseum.org/trc/default.htm

The Seattle Art Museum and Seattle Asian Art Museum is a joint center that offers teacher programs and school tours, and contains a lending library for educators in the Seattle area. Museum's Online Teacher Resource Center (see web address above) contains online lesson plans, activities, and web links for a variety of art topics, including Indian and Southeast Asian art.

Asian Art Museum — Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture
Education Department
Golden Gate Park
San Francisco, CA 94118
Tel: (415) 379-8710
Fax: (415) 668-8928
E-mail: g roups@asianart.org
www.asianart.org

This museum publishes materials for teachers and offers tours and programs for teachers in the Bay Area. Teachers can also acquire hands-on teaching kits and videos through the museum. Depending on size, certain materials such as slide packets and videos can be purchased or loaned (with a deposit) and sent anywhere in the U.S. Contact the Education Department to receive its annual newsletter.

Asia Society
725 Park Ave.
New York, NY 10021
Contact: Education Department
Tel: (212) 327-9227
Fax: (212) 717-1234
E-mail: education@asiasoc.org
www.asiasociety.org/education/

Contact the Education Department for information on curriculum materials on Asia. The Asia Society educational website (www.AskAsia.org), contains lesson plans, art, and readings for students and teachers.

Center for South Asian Studies
University of Virginia
P.O. Box 400169 (110 Minor Hall)
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4169
Tel: (804) 924-8815
E-mail: southasia@virginia.edu
www .virginia.edu/~soasia/

The Center provides accredited short courses on South Asia to K-12 teachers. It has an extensive list of films and videos available on loan free of charge to educators in the southeast United States. Reservations must be made at least two weeks in advance.

East Asian Curriculum Project
East Asian Institute
Columbia University
International Affairs Building

420 West 118th St.
New York, NY 10027
Tel: (212) 854-3976
Fax: (212) 749-1497

This national center is designed to foster K-12 education about Asia. Online workbooks contain information on a variety of topics related to Asia, along with lesson plans and suggested resources that can be used in conjunction with the online workbooks. Focus is on the histories of China, Korea, and Japan.

The Five College Center for East Asian Studies
8 College Lane
Smith College
Northampton, MA 01063
Tel: (413) 585-3751
Fax: (413) 585-3748
E-mail: kmasalsk@smith.edu
www.smith.edu/fcceas

In addition to conducting institutes and workshops for teachers in the New England area, the Center has the following materials on loan free of charge to educators in the New England area: curriculum materials, books, kits, video and sound recordings, slides, maps, posters, games, and software on China, Korea, and Japan. Materials must be returned via UPS (return shipping must be paid by borrower) within three weeks.

Office of Resources for International and Area Studies (ORIAS)
University of California, Berkeley
ORIAS 120A, Stephens Hall #2300
Berkeley, CA 94720-2300
Tel: (510) 643-0868
E-mail: orias@uclink4.berkeley.edu
www.ias.berkeley.edu/orias/

ORIAS conducts teacher institutes for educators in the Bay Area. Online lesson plans are available on the ORIAS website.

Outreach Asia
Center for Asian Studies
The University of Texas at Austin
WCH 4.132, G9300
Austin, TX 78712-1194
Tel: (512) 475-6054/471-5811
Fax: (512) 471-4469
E-mail: outreach@uts.cc.utexas.edu

Outreach Asia has the following materials available for loan free of charge to educators anywhere in the United States: videos (both feature films and documentaries), slides (some include scripts, readings, teacher's notes, fact sheets, or maps), multimedia kits, journals, and curriculum materials. Request for materials must be sent two weeks in advance with an alternate date. Materials must be returned within four weeks.

South Asia Program
Cornell University
170 Uris Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853
Tel: (607) 255-8493
Fax: (607) 254-5000

This video library has videos about South Asia available for loan free of charge to educators anywhere in the United States. Subjects include city life, dance, Buddhism, music, history, Hinduism, etc. It also offers an outreach program to schools in the Ithaca area.

Many universities and colleges with South, Southeast, or East Asian centers have educational outreach programs and resources. Contact universities in your area to find out about local programs.


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MALAYSIA
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Borneo
Celebes
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INDONESIA
Jakarta
Java

Worship at a Stupa

India, Bharhut, early 2d century B.C.E.

Stone

47.5 x 51.9 x 8.0 cm.

Purchase F1932.26

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

In early Buddhist art, the Buddha is rarely depicted in human form; instead, symbols represent his presence and his teachings. The stupa is one of many images used to indicate the presence of the Buddha. This raised sandstone carving from a fence rail that once encircled a stupa refers to the continuing presence of the Buddha on earth. At the center of the carving is the Buddha's funerary mound, or stupa. Worshipers stand to the left and right of the stupa. Celestial figures fly overhead and offer garlands and flowers in adoration. Two pairs of flowering sal trees frame the scene and add to its visual symmetry. Some scholars think sal trees grew in the grove where the Buddha left his physical body and ascended into nirvana. Their presence here helps the viewer to identify the scene with the Buddha's death and his passing into the state of nirvana. Along the base of the dome are nine right hands — nine is an auspicious number in many ancient traditions — that represent worshipers encircling the stupa. One way of showing reverence for the Buddha is to walk slowly around the stupa and place your hands at its base.



One of four scenes from the life of the Buddha

Gandhara (present-day Pakistan), 2d century B.C.E.

Stone

67.0 x 290.0 cm. overall

Purchase F1949.9a-d

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

With the incorporation of the Buddha's human image into art after the first century, sculptors began to depict legends surrounding the youth of Siddhartha, including stories of his birth and death. These legends and historical events were eventually consolidated into a clear story line that usually centers on four main events in the Buddha's life, referred to as the Four Great Miracles. Thereafter, these four events were frequently depicted on narrative relief panels such as this. Such panels were often placed around the base of important stupas and can be considered in chronological order.

The first of these four panels represents the **miracle of the Buddha's birth.** Siddhartha, complete with halo, emerges from the right hip of his mother Maya as she stands beneath a tree. The baby's halo, which signifies divine radiance, is a symbol of honor that routinely appears on South Asian images of deities and royalty. Artistic and cultural elements borrowed from ancient Greek and Roman art include the wreaths around the women's heads, the long-sleeved blouses and gowns, and the cornucopias held by several figures.



One of four scenes from the life of the Buddha

Gandhara (present-day Pakistan), 2d century B.C.E.

Stone

67.0 x 290.0 cm. overall

Purchase F1949.9a-d

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

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The miracle of **the Buddha's enlightenment** appears in the second relief. The Buddha sits beneath a tree in meditation. Mara, the evil one, stands in the foreground, ready to draw his sword. Meanwhile, Mara's fearsome demon armies attack the Buddha from all sides. Notice the array of animals and half animal-half human creatures that make up Mara's army. Despite all this activity around him, the Buddha remains serene. Two soldiers underneath the Buddha's elevated platform are stricken down by the power of the Buddha's awesome presence. With his mudra, or hand gesture, of touching the ground, the Buddha calls the earth to witness his realization of enlightenment and thus his victory over the evil Mara.

One of four scenes from the life of the Buddha

Gandhara (present-day Pakistan), 2d century B.C.E.

Stone

67.0 x 290.0 cm. overall

Purchase F1949.9a-d

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

With the incorporation of the Buddha's human image into art after the first century, sculptors began to depict legends surrounding the youth of Siddhartha, including stories of his birth and death. These legends and historical events were eventually consolidated into a clear story line that usually centers on four main events in the Buddha's life, referred to as the Four Great Miracles. Thereafter, these four events were frequently depicted on narrative relief panels such as this. Such panels were often placed around the base of important stupas and can be considered in chronological order.

Illustrating the miracle of **the first sermon,** the third panel shows the Buddha preaching to a crowd of monks and ordinary citizens. The deer depicted underneath his platform identify the location of the sermon: Deer Park at Sarnath. Between the two deer, which appear to be as mesmerized by the Buddha's teachings as the people gathered, is the wheel of dharma. The wheel is a pre-Buddhist symbol of kingship, and some Hindu gods are shown holding one. Although the Buddha gave up his earthly possessions and kingdom, this wheel refers to his spiritual authority and teaching. His first sermon is thus referred to as "the first turning of the wheel of the dharma [or law]."

One of four scenes from the life of the Buddha

Gandhara (present-day Pakistan), 2d century B.C.E.

Stone

67.0 x 290.0 cm. overall

Purchase F1949.9a-d

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

With the incorporation of the Buddha's human image into art after the first century, sculptors began to depict legends surrounding the youth of Siddhartha, including stories of his birth and death. These legends and historical events were eventually consolidated into a clear story line that usually centers on four main events in the Buddha's life, referred to as the Four Great Miracles. Thereafter, these four events were frequently depicted on narrative relief panels such as this. Such panels were often placed around the base of important stupas and can be considered in chronological order.

In the fourth and final relief, showing the miracle of the **Buddha's journey to nirvana,** local chieftains appear above him and express their intense grief. The monks, on the other hand, seem to be at peace. One monk sits directly under the Buddha's couch and calmly meditates, thus signifying his understanding that the Buddha's passing is not death but rather a release from the endless cycle of rebirth.



Seated Buddha

Central Tibet,* 14th century

Gilt copper with pigment

45.0 x 34.0 x 27.0 cm.

Purchase—Friends of Asian Arts in honor of the 10th Anniversary of the

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery S1997.28

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

This Buddha was created to grace the altar of a Buddhist monastery in Tibet. Sitting serenely with one hand in his lap, the Buddha extends his other hand to touch the earth in a traditional symbol of his enlightenment. To ensure that worshipers recognize this figure as the historic Buddha, the square pattern on the robe recalls the patchwork of fabric scraps that were sewn together for the only garment the Buddha wore as he wandered the land. Characteristic signs of the Buddha's superhuman perfection include the tightly curled hair covering his ushnisha, the bump on the top of his head that symbolizes his immense knowledge. The dot in the middle of his forehead, called an urna, indicates his understanding of all things. His long earlobes, which were caused by the heavy earrings he wore when he was a prince, refer to his rejection of his earthly wealth.

This hollow-cast copper figure was covered in gold using a complex gilding process that is still in use today. A mixture of gold and mercury was applied to the surface of the copper figure, then heated over a smokeless fire until the mercury evaporated and the gold adhered to the surface. The gilded surface was then polished with a smooth stone. Relics or charms could have been inserted into the figure's hollow body before it was sealed with a thin metal plate. Such relics might have included holy texts, precious objects, and ashes or bits of bone left over after the cremation of an enlightened being or great Buddhist teacher.

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* Buddhism had been introduced into Tibet from India as early as the seventh century. Tibet looked to eastern India, Nepal, and Kashmir for spiritual and artistic inspiration.

Standing bodhisattva holding a lotus bud

China, Henan Province, Northern Qi dynasty (550–577)

Limestone

173.3 cm.

Gift of Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer F1968.45

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

This sculpture of a bodhisattva, or enlightened being, is from Xiangtangshan (pronounced she-ang taw-ng shon), a well-known archaeological site in China where many Buddhist chapels were built into mountainside caves. Holding an offering of a lotus bud, this figure would have stood next to an image of the Buddha. Its almost rigid dignity and somewhat introspective expression are characteristic of the high artistic accomplishment of the Xiangtangshan sculptors. The figure wears a skirt, or dhoti, fastened at the waist by a knotted sash. The cloth falls in a fluid, simple manner, forming a scalloped pattern with its hem. The bodhisattva's upper body is partially covered by a long stole draped around the shoulders and alongside the body. It also wears a simple but heavy necklace. The presence of jewelry often distinguishes an image of the Buddha from that of a bodhisattva. Since the Buddha rejected earthly wealth, he is never shown wearing any form of jewelry. A bodhisattva, on the other hand, is usually crowned or bejeweled because he chose to return to earth to assist others in attaining salvation.

The headdress consists of three parts, with ribbons descending over the shoulders and mingling with the carefully placed strands of hair. The rough surface found on the back of this bodhisattva indicates that the sculpture was originally attached to a wall in one of the caves at Xiangtangshan.

Buddhist altarpiece

China, Sui Dynasty, 597

Gilt bronze

32.1 x 14.1 cm.

Gift of Charles Lang Freer F1914.21

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

These three gold-covered figures share a low platform and stand atop pedestals within a few inches of one another. The figures in this altarpiece include a central standing Buddha flanked by standing bodhisattvas. The upper bodies and pointed halos of all three incline forward slightly. This impression of active involvement is reinforced by the smiling, friendly expressions on their faces. The central Buddha's hands are in the Abhaya mudra ("fear not"), and his simple monastic robes clearly contrast with the elaborate gowns of the bodhisattvas. The smaller figures wear intricate headdresses with long ribbons and scarves that seem to flow alongside their willowy bodies.

The central Buddha's physique and adornment are simple in comparison. He stands upon an inverted lotus that fits into an elaborate base, which, in turn, fits onto a low, rectangular stand. In contrast, the bodhisattvas stand on long-stemmed lotuses that project out from the rectangular base into space. A long inscription on the front of the pedestal reads: "On the twenty-fourth day of the tenth month in the seventeenth year of Kaihuang [December 8, 597], donor Wu...had an image made." The inscription then goes on to list the fifteen donors after "donor Wu," two of whom were women of some standing in the imperial court, and many of whom share the same family name.

Guanyin of Eleven Heads

China, Shaanxi Province, Tang dynasty, ca. 703

Limestone

108.8 x 31.7 x 15.3 cm.

Gift of Charles Lang Freer   F1909.98

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Guanyin, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, holds a flower in his raised right hand and grasps the end of a long scarf with his left hand. The deity wears a thin skirt, or dhoti, tied around the hips, and jeweled arm rings and necklaces adorn the body. The sensuous style of the sculpture reflects the influence of Indian art in China.

The hair is arranged into a high cone, and ten small bodhisattva heads are scattered throughout the hair. The heads represent different stages on the path to enlightenment, while Guanyin's head stands for its final attainment. The halo and the two celestial beings flying overhead refer to divine radiance and enlightenment. Guanyin stands upon a lotus flower pedestal, a symbol of purity and divinity.

Guanyin is one of a few bodhisattvas that became an independent deity and attracted a following, much as the Buddha himself did. Guanyin is of great importance in the realm of Chinese Buddhism. This sculpture once adorned the Seven Jewels Pagoda, which was built in the Tang dynasty (618–907) capital, present-day Xi'an.



Guardian figures

Japan, Kamakura period (1185–1333)

Wood

226.4 cm. (F1949.20), 233.5 cm. (F1949.21)

Purchase F1949.20 and .21

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

These powerful figures with ferocious expressions are "guardian" images that once flanked the entrance gate to a Buddhist temple near Osaka, Japan. Such guardians are meant to ward off evil spirits and protect the sacred ground of the temple. The practice of placing guardian figures at a temple entrance has origins in a legend about the Buddha, which says powerful guardians attended him as he taught and traveled throughout India. In China and Japan, these guardian figures frequently appear in pairs, often in the form of larger-than-life, half-naked warriors who raise their clenched fists and sometimes hold weapons. These particular statues were once painted dark red, but the color has worn off due to centuries of exposure as they stood guard at the temple gates.

The Japanese produced Buddhist images in wood that range in size from monumental statues to miniature, devotional images intended for portable shrines. Many times figures were not carved from one piece of wood; rather, numerous uniquely shaped wooden blocks were seamlessly joined together without the use of metal. For example, the heads of these guardians consist of three separate pieces: the mask or face, the back of the head, and a hollow ring on the sides of which are the ears.




Bosatsu

Japan, Heian period (794–1185)

Wood

Image, 98.0 x 75.0 x 50.8 cm.; overall, 206 x 114.0 x 114.0 cm.

Purchase F1962.21

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This wood sculpture represents a bodhisattva (*bosatsu* in Japanese) seated in meditation on a lotus-shaped pedestal. The halo behind the figure still shows traces of its original gold-leaf decoration. Both the bodhisattva's facial expression and the hand gesture are intended to convey reassurance and peace. This figure, which would have been placed on the altar of a Buddhist temple, exemplifies the simple, elegant style prevalent in Japanese Buddhist sculpture late in the Heian period. The wooden figure consists of seven separate parts. The elaborate lotus-shaped pedestal is made of eight components, but it was not a part of the original design for this statue. The entire figure was once covered with black lacquer and gold leaf, which have worn away over the past thousand years.

Amida Buddha, Attended by Kannon and Seishi, Welcoming Souls to Paradise

Japan, Kamakura (1185–1333) or Muromachi (1333–1573) period

Hanging scroll; color and gold on silk

110.0 x 49.3 cm.

Purchase F1954.9

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Japanese belief in salvation by the Buddha of Infinite Light, who was known as Amida in Japan, reached its height during the Kamakura period of warrior rule. Amida was believed to descend to earth at the moment of a person's death to rescue the soul and carry it to paradise, where it would be reborn. Two or more bodhisattvas often accompanied Amida.

Buddhist priests frequently carried paintings such as this one to a believer's deathbed as a final assurance of salvation. This painting depicts Amida Buddha welcoming the souls of the faithful into paradise. Amida is the central figure; his two attendants — the bodhisattvas Kannon and Seishi — form the base of the triangular composition. Amida stands with his right hand raised in the Abhaya mudra, a hand gesture that means "fear not." His left arm is lowered in a welcoming mudra. The combination of these two gestures — the raised hand represents the heavenly realm and the lowered hand the earthly world — suggests that Amida is capable of saving both those in the heavens and those on earth.

Below her left hand is the smaller figure of the bodhisattva Kannon. Her body is turned and bent slightly forward, and she holds a lotus blossom in her hands, upon which she will receive the faithful souls. The deity wears a crown and many jewels in typical bodhisattva tradition. The bodhisattva Seishi to Amida's right forms the third corner of the pyramid. The same size as Kannon, Seishi is similarly clothed and bejeweled and is depicted in a similar stance of humble devotion. Seishi differs from Kannon, however, in that the hands are pressed together with her fingers extended in front of the chest in a mudra of prayer and devotion.

